

PEEPS AT
ANCIENT CIVILISATIONS

3424
1.1

ANCIENT ROME

K. C. COLLEGE LIBRARY
HETAMPUR

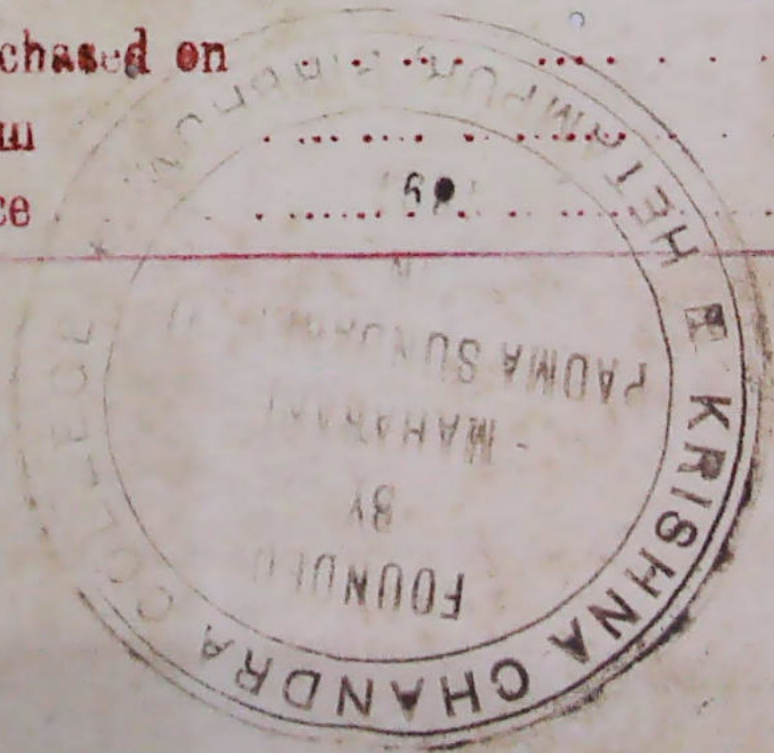
Accession No 3481

Call No

Purchased on

From

Price 160



IN THE SAME SERIES

Each with 12 or 16 full-page illustrations in colour and in black and white.

ANCIENT ASSYRIA
ANCIENT CRETE
(The Sea-Kings' Eyrie)
ANCIENT EGYPT
ANCIENT GREECE
ANCIENT JERUSALEM
ANCIENT PALESTINE

MEN OF THE OLD STONE AGE

A Prospectus of the above or complete list of the "Peep Series" will be sent on receipt of a written application.

PUBLISHED BY

A. & C. BLACK, LTD., 4, & 6 SOHO SQUARE, LONDON, W.1

KCC



R3481

AGENTS

New York

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

Melbourne

THE OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

Toronto

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY OF CANADA

Bombay Calcutta Madras

MACMILLAN AND COMPANY, LTD.

K. C. COLLEGE LIBRARY
METAMPUR

Accession No. 3481

Call No.

Purchased on

From

Price





A ROMAN STANDARD BEARER.

PEEPS AT ANCIENT CIVILISATIONS

ANCIENT ROME

BY

JAMES BAIKIE, D.D., F.R.A.S.

AUTHOR OF "PEEPS AT ANCIENT EGYPT,"
"PEEPS AT ANCIENT ASSYRIA," ETC.

WITH TWELVE FULL-PAGE ILLUSTRATIONS
FOUR OF THEM IN COLOUR

A. & C. BLACK, LTD
4, 5 & 6 SOHO SQUARE, LONDON, W. 1



937.01
BAI—an

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

First published in 1917
Reprinted in 1925 and 1932

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. THE CITY OF CITIES	I
II. STORIES OF THE CITY'S CHILDHOOD	5
III. A FIGHT FOR FREEDOM	15
IV. THE ROMAN ARMY	20
V. ROME'S BATTLE-FLEET	32
VI. A VISIT TO ROME IN A.D. 71: THE JOURNEY	40
VII. A VISIT TO ROME: THE TOWN-HOUSE AND THE CITY	47
VIII. THE TRIUMPH	60
IX. THE GAMES: THE CIRCUS MAXIMUS	67
X. THE GAMES: THE COLOSSEUM	75
XI. THE SECRET OF ROME'S GREATNESS	85



LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	<i>Frontispiece</i> FACING PAGE
*1. A ROMAN STANDARD BEARER - - -	13
2. THE BRONZE WOLF OF THE CAPITOL - - -	20
3. STATUE OF GERMANICUS - - -	29
*4. A ROMAN QUINQUEREME - - -	36
*5. THE ARCH OF TITUS - - -	41
6. TEMPLE OF MATER MATUTA - - -	56
7. THE ROMAN FORUM - - -	61
8. HADRIAN'S TOMB AND ÆLIAN BRIDGE - - -	68
9. THE REMAINS OF THE TEMPLE OF CASTOR AND POLLUX - - -	72
*10. ROUNDING THE META IN THE CIRCUS MAXIMUS - - -	77
11. THE COLOSSEUM - - -	84
12. THE PANTHEON - - -	

* These four illustrations are in colour.

Sketch-Map of Ancient Rome inside front cover.

Plan of the Forum Romanum inside back cover.

HRH
101

ANCIENT ROME

CHAPTER I

THE CITY OF CITIES

ABOUT midway down its western face, or its shin, the long boot-leg of Italy is crossed by a comparatively small but swiftly flowing river, which rises in the central mountain range of the land, the Apennines, or Abruzzi, and, after wandering among the hills awhile, flows for twenty-five miles across the plain before it reaches the Western Mediterranean, or Tyrrhene Sea, as it used to be called. The plain, with the hill slopes of the Apennines to the east and south of the river, was peopled by several races of the one stock, which went by the names of Umbrians, Sabines, Samnites, and Latins. The Umbrians, Sabines, and Samnites were mainly hill-folk, while the Latins occupied the plain between the mountains and the sea, south of the river. North of the plain and river were the cities of a race called the Etruscans, who did not belong to Italy to begin with, but had wandered into the country so far back in time that nobody knows when they came; and south of the Latin plain came the cities of Campania, which were founded by colonists from Greece, so that all this part of Italy came to be called Magna Græcia.

Thus the Latins and their neighbours, the Umbrians, Sabines, and Samnites, were hemmed in between two foreign races, and the Latins especially, dwelling in

Ancient Rome

the plain, were in danger from the Etruscans, who were a restless and warlike race. One splendid natural fortress presented itself to them in the extinct volcano known as the Alban Mount, which rises to a height of about 3,000 feet in the middle of the Latin plain, a few miles south-west of the river; and the first important city of the Latins, Alba Longa, rose on this mountain-side. But soon the need was felt of having a stronghold on the river-bank to prevent the Etruscans from crossing, and a band of adventurers was sent out from Alba Longa to find a suitable place for such an outpost and to occupy it.

At a point about twenty miles by water from the river's mouth, the pioneers found a group of small hills—seven as they counted, though only three of them were of any importance—rising from the river-bank to a height of about 160 feet. In the middle of the river lay a small island, which, if unoccupied, would help an enemy to cross, but, if occupied, would make crossing almost impossible. It was the best spot for their purpose that the colonists could find; and here they began to rear the rough walls and towers and houses of Alba Longa's outpost against the Etruscans. To the little fortress-town they gave, for what reason we do not know, though various stories were invented to account for it, the name of "Roma."

Little did those early Latin wanderers know how great a thing they had begun, or how vast a force they had set in motion. They thought, I suppose, that they were merely taking a prudent step to protect their native Alba Longa from the northern enemy. But ere long Alba Longa itself was eclipsed by the growing strength of the new stronghold by the river-bank, and the daughter became head of the household, while her mother sank into insignificance and finally vanished. Bit by bit the growing power of Roma

The City of Cities

asserted itself over all the other cities of the Latins, till they had become her subject-allies. Two hundred and forty years after the first stones of the little outpost were laid on the hill by the river, she had defeated the attempts of the Etruscans and of her own kindred to interfere with her government, and stood out as evidently the coming power of the land. In another two and a half centuries, in spite of one great overthrow from a barbarian host of Gauls, desperate and unceasing struggles with her own kinsfolk from the hills, and a terrible wrestle with the great Greek soldier of fortune, Pyrrhus, King of Epirus, she stood forth mistress of Italy.

Then came a great struggle, lasting for almost one hundred and twenty years, between Rome and the great commercial city, Carthage, which had been rising on the African side of the Mediterranean. That deadly contest determined whether the Empire of the world was to rest in Roman hands or in the hands of an Oriental race, for the Carthaginians were of Phœnician stock, kinsfolk to the Jews. When it ceased, with the utter destruction of Carthage, one hundred and forty-six years before the coming of Christ, Rome, though weary after her long struggle, was manifest mistress of the world as men knew it then. In another century she had carried her eagles on the east almost to the Caucasus, and on the north-west was looking across from France to our own far islands, already marked for conquest.

Her ancient form of government worn out, she took a fresh lease of life under a new one, and her early emperors carried her sway still farther out into the wilds of Europe, bringing civilization and law wherever the eagles flew. And when at last the Empire fell to pieces of its own weight and weariness, she had taught the nations not a little of the knowledge by which

Ancient Rome

she herself had conquered and ruled, so that they were able to take up for themselves the work that fell from her failing hands. Even then her destiny was not accomplished. A new and still greater power, a power over the spirits of men instead of over their bodies, came to enthrone itself in the old colony of long-dead Alba Longa, and for centuries the head of the Christian faith ruled from his Roman palace over all the civilized world, with more absolute sway than Consul or Emperor ever knew. And though that sway be shrunk and diminished now, yet still one-half of Christendom looks to Rome with reverence and trust for spiritual guidance, and the great city by the Tiber still draws the hearts and the imaginations of all men to itself with the wonderful power of its great past.

Such great things have come of that little colony that Alba Longa sent forth in the dawn of history to guard the hills by the little island of the Tiber. No other city has ever had such a history. Babylon may have lasted longer, but Babylon's Empire was only a fraction of the Empire of Rome, and though we owe much to the learning of the wise men of the East, we owe more to the great law-givers and statesmen of Rome. London has a far vaster population than Rome ever knew, but London is a mushroom city compared with the grey old queen by the Tiber, and owes, besides, her birth to Rome.

There are just two towns that can rival the great imperial city in her claim to sway the hearts of men. Little towns they are, both of them, in little countries, but it may be a question whether the world has not owed more to Jerusalem and Athens than ever it has to Rome. Yet, even if it be so, the City of the Seven Hills has still its own secure place and claim upon our interest, and without its story the history of the world would be robbed of half its colour and romance. So

The City of Cities

let us glance, in the chapters of this little book, at the old stories of how the little colony of Alba Longa grew from its feeble infancy to its sturdy manhood, and at the surer histories that tell us of the heroism and steadfastness by which, once grown, it conquered the world, and try to learn a little of what life was like in Rome in the great days of old.

Will you remember, when we come in the next chapter to tell some of the ancient legends of how the city was founded and grew, that we are not to think of these old stories as serious history in the same sense as the story of the long war with Carthage or the conquests of Julius Cæsar? They are romances, poetical versions of events, which were composed either by the Romans themselves or by Greek scholars for them, to account for those early beginnings of which they really knew nothing certainly. They stand on much the same level as our own stories of the coming of Brutus of Troy to these islands, and have perhaps even less fact behind them than all the wonderful fancies with which poets have embroidered our traditions of King Arthur and his knights. But they have their own interest and their own value all the same, for it was on these romantic stories, and such as these, that the patriotism of the Romans in the great conquering days of Rome's history was nourished.

CHAPTER II

STORIES OF THE CITY'S CHILDHOOD

REMEMBERING, then, what I have told you of the romantic character of the earliest stories of Rome, let us hear what the Romans used to believe, or, at all events, used to relate, about the founding of their city.

Ancient Rome

It came to pass, the old romancers tell us, that when the Wooden Horse had made the Greeks masters of Troy, and all the gallant defenders of the famous city of Priam were being slain, there were two, Æneas and Antenor, who escaped their fury.

Antenor and his companions fled from Troy; and after many wanderings and strange haps they settled in the coast-lands between the Alps and the sea, at the northernmost corner of the Adriatic—the same country which the great Republic of Venice afterwards held. Æneas, who was said to be the son of the great goddess Aphrodite, whom the Romans knew as Venus, wandered first to Macedonia, then to Sicily, and finally landed on the western coast of Italy. He and his men, weary and hungry, with no possessions but their ships and their weapons, but war-hardened and daring, were no very pleasant visitors to any land; and so King Latinus, who ruled over the country where they had come ashore, gathered his men and came down to the coast to stop by force the plundering of these wanderers from the sea. But when the two little companies (you can scarcely call them armies) faced one another, and were only waiting the signal for the fight, King Latinus, old and wise, came out before his line and called for a conference with the leader of the sea-rovers. Æneas stepped forward, a manifest prince among men, both in arms and bearing, and when he had told how he and his men came to Italy with no ill intent, but as homeless wanderers seeking to found a new city for themselves, King Latinus and his men, instead of fighting, welcomed them. An alliance was made between Æneas and the King, who was glad to gain so many valiant and well-armed fighters to his kingdom. Lavinia, the daughter of Latinus, was married to the Trojan Prince, and the new town which the rovers founded was called Lavinium in honour

Stories of the City's Childhood

of the Princess. In a while a little son was born to Æneas and Lavinia, who was called Ascanius, but some say that Ascanius was Æneas's son by an earlier marriage, and had accompanied his father in the flight from Troy.

Now before Æneas came to Italy, the Princess Lavinia had been promised in marriage to Turnus, chief of the Rutuli, and when he heard how his promised bride had been given to another, Turnus was very wroth. He gathered his army and made war upon Latinus and his new friends, and in the battle which followed, though the allies were victorious, old Latinus was slain, and Æneas took command in his stead. But Turnus was not yet done with, for he besought the help of the Etruscans and returned with a great army to avenge his wrongs. Then indeed there was a great and fierce battle, and in the midst of it, when Æneas and his men were beginning to break the enemy's line, and to drive their foes before them, there came down for a space cloud and thick darkness upon the battlefield, and when the darkness had passed the Prince Æneas also had passed away from among mortal men. And, though no man saw his going, yet his victorious men knew well that he had gone to dwell with the immortal gods, and to be made like unto them. Therefore they called him no more Æneas, but Jupiter, as being one with him who is the Father of gods and men; and they decreed that men should reverence and worship his memory.

Now for a time after the passing of Æneas, his wife, the Princess Lavinia, ruled in Lavinium until the boy Ascanius should grow to manhood. But in the fulness of the time, when Ascanius came to age and strength, he would not rule in his mother's city, whose bounds were full to overflowing, but left Lavinium to her rule, and went forth and founded a

Ancient Rome

new city, Alba Longa, in the midst of the Latin plain, on the slopes of the great Alban Mount, which once had been a burning mountain, but the gods had quenched its fires. There in his new city Ascanius ruled, and his sons and his sons' sons after him, for many a year. And it fell out that one of these, called Tiberinus, was drowned in the crossing of the river Albula, which runs across the Latin plain; and so it is that the name of that river was changed, and is called after him Tiber even unto this day.

At length to one of the Kings of Alba Longa, called Proca, there were born two sons, Numitor the elder and Amulius the younger; and the throne should have fallen to Numitor, according to ancient custom. But Amulius, the younger son, was a fierce and wicked man, and when his father died he drove his brother from the throne and seized it for himself; and lest there should be anyone left to thrust him from his ill-gotten seat, he slew the sons of Numitor and made their one sister, Rhea Silvia, become one of the priestesses of Vesta, who may never be given in marriage, that so none might be left to Numitor to claim what had been wrongfully taken from him.

But so it fell out that the great god Mars, whom the Greeks call Ares, saw and loved Rhea Silvia, and took her for his bride, in spite of the vestal vow, and there were born to her twin sons, Romulus and Remus. Then indeed Amulius trembled between wrath and fear, and he cast Rhea Silvia into prison, and ordered the twin boys to be thrown into the Tiber. It was the time when Tiber overflows his banks, and the cradle with the boys was not swept into the main current of the river, but was stranded in shallow flood water, not far from the hut of a shepherd named Faustulus. And so it was that while the cradle with the babies lay stranded, there came down a she-wolf

Stories of the City's Childhood

to the river to drink, and seeing the boys, and knowing, with the wisdom that the gods have given to the beasts, that they were hungry, she nursed them, and gave them of her milk, and watched over them. And Faustulus, coming by and seeing this strange chance, took the boys into his care, and gave them to his wife Larentia to bring up. So the boys grew and waxed strong on the meat of the very man who had wished to slay them; for Faustulus was the shepherd of King Amulius.

Now it happened that when the boys were grown to manhood, Remus was captured by brigands and taken before King Amulius on a false charge of having raided the lands which still belonged to his deposed grandfather Numitor; and Amulius handed him over to Numitor for trial and punishment, not knowing who he was. But Numitor, struck by the young man's noble bearing, made inquest into his origin, and found that this youth was indeed his grandson. Meanwhile, Romulus had gathered a troop of his friends to rescue his brother, and in the struggle which followed, the false King Amulius was slain, and the aged Numitor was restored to his throne. Yet Romulus and Remus chose not to dwell with their grandfather in Alba Longa, but to found a city for themselves.

• For the site of their new abode they chose the group of hills by the Tiber where Rome now stands; and, as they were twins, and neither could claim the right to rule over the other, they elected to let the gods decide by omen which should be lord of the city that was to be. Romulus therefore, with his friends, took his post on the Palatine hill, and Remus, with his, upon the Aventine, there to wait for the decision of heaven. Now it was so, that to Remus, thus waiting upon the Aventine, there appeared first a flight of six vultures, whereupon he concluded that the gods had chosen

Ancient Rome

him as ruler, and sent his messengers to his brother to acquaint him with the event. But before the messengers arrived, Romulus spied a flight of twelve vultures; and thus a new dispute arose, Remus contending that he, who had first seen the vultures, was chosen, and Romulus that the gods, who had sent him the greater number, had made choice of him. And some say that in the heat of contention Romulus struck and slew Remus his brother, but others that, Romulus having begun to build the wall of the new city, Remus in scorn leaped over it; whereupon his brother, in anger at his contempt, slew him, crying, "So shall it be henceforth with everyone who shall leap over my walls." So the new city was founded in strife and bloodshed, and Romulus was left as its sole ruler.

Yet though the young King had built his fortress on the Palatine hill great and strong, the very width of its circuit made the handful of men who had gathered within the new walls look paltry. Therefore Romulus reared a place of refuge on the neighbouring Capitoline hill. An Asylum it was called, and there was proclaimed free entrance into it for everyone—stranger, slave, robber, or wanderer—who was dissatisfied with his present way of life. So it came about that everyone that was in distress, and everyone that was discontented, or in debt, runaway slaves, and criminals fleeing from justice, all gathered themselves to the Asylum on the Capitoline Mount, and Romulus added this motley band of broken men to the population of his new city, and reigned as King over them.

But as yet there were none but men within the walls, and, if the city were to endure, they must have wives. Yet when Romulus appealed to the tribes around—the Sabines, and the people of Cæcina, Antemnæ, and Crustumium—to allow their daughters

Stories of the City's Childhood

to be given in wedlock to his men, he was met with scornful refusals, and was told that the only way to gain wives for his companions was to open a second asylum for women of like character to the men who had come to the first. So the King, repulsed when he sought his end by fair means, resolved to gain it by deceit. Proclaiming a great festival in honour of the god Consus, he invited all the peoples of the tribes and cities around to come and view the sacred games which were to be held in the new city. Then all the Sabines, curious to see what manner of city this abode of rogues might be, flocked to the games with their sons and daughters, gaily dressed and bearing no weapons, for that the occasion was a peaceful one.

So when the sports had gone on for awhile, and the attention of all was fixed on the arena, Romulus gave a signal, and bands of his men, armed and resolute, brake in upon the company from all sides, and carried off all the fairest damsels they could lay hands on. So the men of Rome were furnished with wives, and the Sabine maidens, after bewailing for a time their sudden fate, became accustomed to their new home and settled down in peaceable marriage with those who had stolen them. But the Sabine men, and the men of Cæcina, Antemnæ, and Crustumium were not so lightly content to sit still under the slight that had been put upon them. Unarmed as they had been at the games, they were unable to resist; but ere long they gathered their strength together and marched to exact vengeance. The first attempts of the three nearest towns failed, because they were too hasty and enraged to agree together upon the plan of their warfare, but rushed singly, in blind fury, upon their enemy, and were beaten one by one. But the Sabines were more cautious, and their enmity, more wisely

Ancient Rome

guided, came near to be the ending of the new city ere its course was well begun.

For the men of the Sabine tribes gathered together into one great army under their King, Titus Tatius, and they marched into the Roman land and laid siege first to the Capitol, the Asylum of Romulus. Now in command of the Capitol Romulus had set a good man and true, Spurius Tarpeius; but his daughter Tarpeia was false-hearted, and was devoured by pride and a desire for gold and for personal adornments. She looked from the battlements upon Tatius and his men as they gathered beneath the hill, and marked the golden bracelets which each man wore upon his left arm, and her false heart coveted them, both for their price and their beauty. Now so it fell out that to her it was assigned to go forth from the fortress to draw water from a sacred spring without the walls to pour before the gods, and, because her going was an act of worship, the Sabines allowed her to pass. Yet Tatius drew near and spoke to her, and in the greed of her heart she pledged herself to open to the Sabine army the gate of the citadel, if each man would give to her "what he wore upon his left arm."

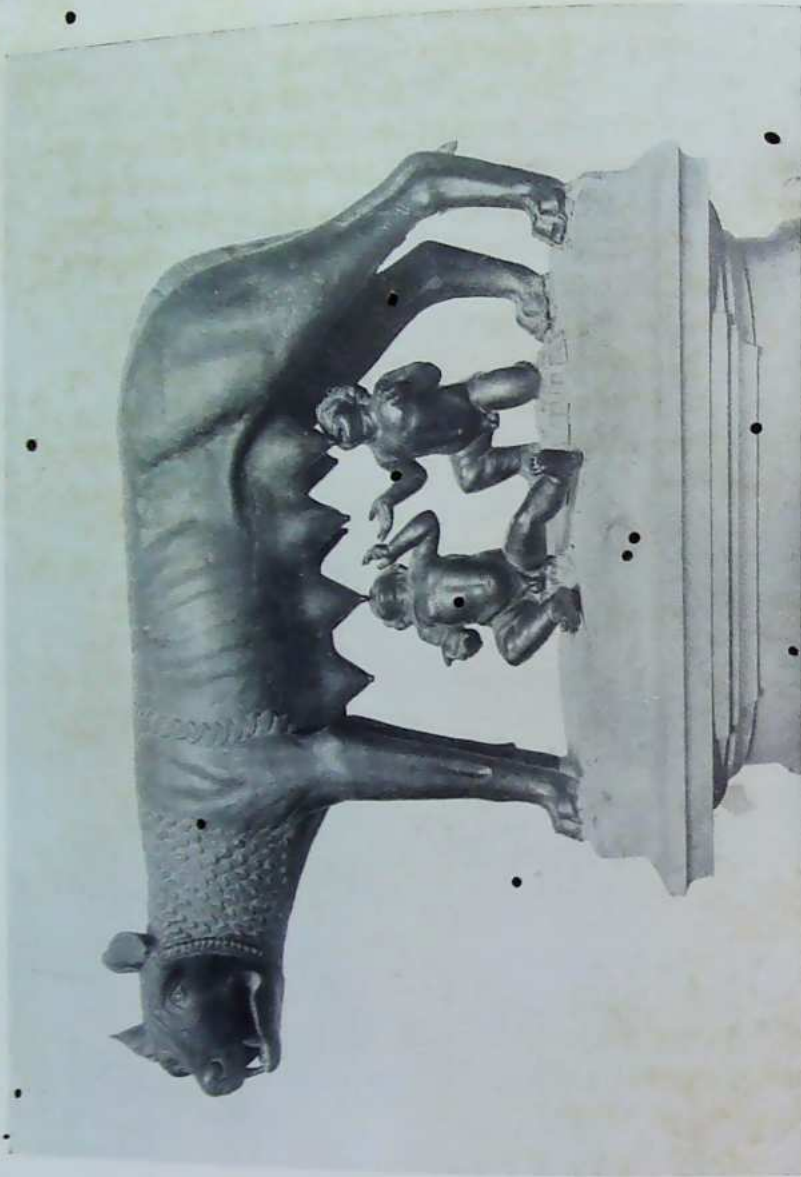
So when the night came, Tatius and his men stole silently up to the gate, and the false Tarpeia opened it to them. And as Tatius passed her, he called to his men not to forget to give her what they wore upon their left arms; and, so saying, in scorn of the treachery by which he profited, he threw not only his bracelet, but his heavy shield upon the traitress; and each man, as he followed, did the like, till Tarpeia was crushed to death beneath the bucklers, and got nothing of her treachery but shame and mortal pain. And the rock on the Capitoline hill where Tarpeia died is called the Tarpeian rock even unto this day, and when a Roman has proved traitor to his city, he is taken to

Stories of the City's Childhood

its summit and cast down therefrom, that he may die where Rome's first betrayer perished.

Now the Capitol was in the hands of Tatius and his men, and a great battle began on the low ground between the Sabines and Romulus and his men from the Palatine. Both sides fought stoutly, and what might have been the end none may know save the immortal gods, for in the midst of the strife the Sabine women, whose capture had caused all the contention, ran between the two hosts and besought them to make peace, since it could be no cure for the wrong they had suffered that the fathers they had left, or the husbands to whom they were now wedded, should be slain; for so they must be left either orphans or widows. And to them the warriors on both sides gave heed, and peace was made, and alliance between Sabine and Roman, and Romulus and Tatius were made joint Kings over the united peoples. But after a time Tatius was slain in a quarrel, and Romulus was left to reign alone; and so all things seemed to turn to the advantage and to the greatness of the new city.

Now when Romulus was sole King over Roman and Sabine, he reigned for a season in great power; but though he was ever successful in war, he grew arrogant and selfish in time of peace, and oppressed the people, so that many were his enemies in secret. But he formed for himself a bodyguard of three hundred chosen young men whom he named Celeres, because of their swiftness to do his errands, and paid no heed to the murmurs of his subjects, but thought only of his own ease and pride. It so fell out that when he had reigned for forty years he held a great review of his army in the plain by the city which is called the Field of Mars, and all the people were gathered together to the spectacle. Then suddenly cloud and thick darkness came down upon the land, and the gods sent lightning



THE BRONZE WOLF OF THE CAPITOL
With Romulus and Remus

Ancient Rome

and thunder and hail, so that no man might see his neighbour for a season, and none could hear the words that another spake, and the whole assemblage was in great fear and doubt as to what this sudden portent might signify. And when the clouds and the darkness had passed, and the sun shone out once more, lo! the throne where Romulus had sat was void, neither did any man henceforward see the King alive on earth.

So the minds of men were troubled, for though their King had of late been a proud oppressor, yet they could not forget that he had made the city great and strong. And some said that his enemies among those nobles of the city who were called senators had seized on the King in the darkness and torn him limb from limb, and hidden the fragments of his body under their cloaks; and other some that the gods had caught him up by a whirlwind into heaven, as they had caught Æneas. But after a time one of the senators named Proculus Julius, a man held in high regard, came into the assembly of the citizens and spake on this wise to them: "Citizens, at break of dawn to-day, the Father of the city suddenly descended from heaven and appeared to me. Whilst, thrilled with awe, I stood rapt before him in deepest reverence, praying that I might be pardoned for gazing upon him, 'Go,' said he, 'tell the Romans that it is the will of heaven that my Rome should be the head of all the world. Let them henceforth cultivate the arts of war, and let them know assuredly, and hand down the knowledge to posterity, that no human might can withstand the arms of Rome.'" In this fashion the troubled minds of the Roman citizens were soothed, and Romulus, thus snatched from them, was henceforth adored as the god Quirinus, and a great festival, called the Quirinalia, was held each year in his honour.

Now whether Proculus Julius were merely a deceiver,

A Fight for Freedom

who told his story to turn away suspicion from the murderers of Romulus, or whether he really believed that he had seen and heard that which he declared to the citizens, may not be lightly determined. Only this one thing do we know assuredly, that the promise made by heaven through him, if indeed heaven spake by his lips, has been fulfilled in such fashion that no man may gainsay it.

CHAPTER III

A FIGHT FOR FREEDOM

AFTER Romulus had gone from among men, there followed him, as rulers upon the throne of Rome, six other kings. Some of them were good men and true, and some were rather warlike and tyrannous than good; but under them all the city grew and waxed mighty, till all the neighbouring land owned its dominion. Now the last of these kings, Lucius Tarquinius by name, called also "Superbus," or "The Proud," because of his arrogance, was not of Roman but of Etruscan descent; for his ancestors had been but simple Etruscan squires before his grandsire Tarquinius Priscus came to Rome and climbed to the throne. Tarquin the Proud was a good soldier and a strong ruler, but he had not learned to rule his own house, and his sons were wild and wicked men, who denied themselves nothing that their eyes coveted or their hearts desired. And, in especial, one of them, Sextus Tarquin, wrought foul wrong to Lucretia, wife of a noble Roman named Collatinus, while her husband was fighting for Rome at the siege of Ardea.

Then Lucretia summoned her husband and his friends from the camp at Ardea, and when she had

Ancient Rome

told them the story of the bitter wrong that Sextus Tarquin had wrought, she struck a knife into her heart, and so died before them all, preferring death to a dishonoured life. Then Collatinus, and Brutus his friend, who was near of kin to the King, and all that had heard the dreadful story of Lucretia, took oath to submit no longer to the tyranny and cruelty of the Tarquins; and so, stirring up the whole city by the recital of the wrongs of Lucretia, and the sight of her dead body, they raised revolt and declared Tarquin the Proud deposed. And when the King came in haste from the camp to quell the revolt, he found the gates shut against him, and behind him the army which he had left, stirred up by Brutus, joined the rebellion and drove out the younger Tarquins. So the King and his whole evil brood were forced to flee from Rome, and they betook themselves for help to the Etruscans, from whom they were sprung. But the evil Sextus, fleeing to the town of Gabii, which he counted his own domain, was there brought to his deserved end, in revenge for all the rapines and murders which he had wrought.

So the whole race of kings—nay, also the very idea of kingship—was cast out from Rome, as hateful and not to be endured; and the great city became a republic, governed by a council of three hundred of its greatest and wisest men, who were called the Senate, while the chief officers of the State, who governed in place of the King, were two men chosen from among the honourable men of the city, and called Consuls. They held office only for a year, that so no man might ever become too mighty for the safety of the city, or might dream of setting up the kingship again.

But Tarquin the Proud and his sons were by no means minded to give up their State and power without a struggle. So first they allied themselves with the

A Fight for Freedom

men of Veii, and made war on Rome, and when the battle went against them they turned to the great King Lars Porsenna of Clusium; and because kings like not that the subjects of other kings should by rebellion set a bad example to their own subjects, Porsenna gathered all the might of the Etruscans and marched into Roman territory to restore the Tarquins. And in the war that came of his adventure there were many noble passages of arms and deeds of daring, so that this war remained for ever noteworthy to the people of Rome.

For the army of Porsenna was greater than that the Romans might meet it on the open field; wherefore they withdrew within the walls, leaving a guard in the fort called Janiculum, on the farther side of Tiber, to cover the approach to the wooden bridge (called the Sublician Bridge, because it was built on piles), by which alone the enemy might cross. But the great host of the Etruscans stormed Janiculum, and slew the men who held it, and for awhile it seemed that naught could keep them from crossing the bridge and sacking Rome. Then one brave Roman, named Horatius Cocles, ran to the bridge-head, shouting, as he went to those behind to hew down the bridge while he held back the enemy, and calling for two others to stand beside him in the narrow way and keep the passage. So Spurius Lartius and Titus Herminius followed him, and took their stand, the one on his right hand and the other on his left, so that the three shields blocked the whole way, and none might pass to the bridge without venturing on the swords of the three champions of Rome.

The Etruscans, brave men also, sent chosen warriors to the assault again and again, but numbers were of no avail in so narrow a pass, and the three Romans proved more than a match for any three of their enemies, so

Ancient Rome

that at last the ground before the keepers of the bridge was cumbered with the slain. Meanwhile the Romans behind were hewing with all their strength at the bridge; and when he saw that it was just about to fall, Horatius ordered his companions to retire and save themselves. But he himself remained alone before the bridge-head, scornfully defying the whole Etruscan army, and catching on his shield the javelins which they cast against him. Then from behind him came the crash of the falling bridge, and the shout of the exulting Romans, who saw their city saved, and Horatius, raising his sword to heaven, cried, "Tiberinus, holy father, I pray thee to receive into thy kindly stream these weapons and this thy warrior." So saying, he plunged into the river, and, heavily armed and sore wounded as he was, swam safely across to his friends. And great awe fell upon the Etruscans, and the Romans, in gratitude to him who had saved them, set up his statue in the Comitium, or place of assembly, and bestowed upon him out of the common lands as much land as he could plough in one day.

As for the many other brave deeds which marked this struggle with Lars Porsenna, as that of Mucius Scævola, who burned his right hand in the fire that the Etruscan King might learn how vain it was to think of forcing him to tell the secrets of the Roman plans, or that of the maiden hostage Clœlia, who swam the Tiber and escaped—to recount all these would take over long, so this of Horatius and the bridge must suffice. And in the end it fell out that the Etruscan King, despairing to take Rome, consented to withdraw his army and to make terms of peace; and the Tarquins still remained in exile.

Yet still another attempt to bring back the tyrants was made by the thirty Latin cities, under the command of the Prince Octavius Mamilius, son-in-law

A Fight for Freedom

of King Tarquin. The battle was joined near by the Lake Regillus in the land of Tusculum, and the fighting was fierce and stubborn. Valerius, one of the Roman Consuls, was slain, and in the fight around his dead body, Herminius, one of those who had kept the bridge along with Horatius, slew the Prince Mamilius, but was himself slain as he stooped to take the spoils of his dead foe. Now the legend says that in the thickest of the fight, when the Romans were hard bested, and the Dictator, Aulus Postumius, was about to head another charge on the Latin ranks, he became suddenly aware of a pair of warriors who rode beside him.

"So like they were, no mortal
Might one from other know.
White as snow their armour was;
Their steeds were white as snow.
Never on earthly anvil
Did such rare armour gleam;
And never did such gallant steeds
Drink of an earthly stream."

Behind these strange champions the Romans charged, and not all the bravery of the Latins could withstand their onset. The standards of the thirty cities were swept away like straws on a flooded stream, and the last hopes of the Tarquins were drowned in blood.

Then it came to pass that the same evening, as Sempronius Atratinus, who had been left in command at Rome, was watching on the walls, he saw two horsemen spurring towards the city.

"So like they were, man never
Saw twins so like before;
Red with gore their armour was,
Their steeds were red with gore."

They gave to the anxious citizens the news that on that very day the thirty Latin cities had been vanquished by the Roman arms. Then they rode slowly

Ancient Rome

on to the Forum amidst the shouts of the people, while laurel wreaths were showered upon them; but no man dared to ask who they might be. At last they came to the Pool of Juturna, in the Forum, hard by the temple of Vesta.

"When they drew nigh to Vesta,
They vaulted down amain,
And washed their horses in the well
That springs by Vesta's fane.
And straight again they mounted,
And rode to Vesta's door;
Then, like a blast, away they passed,
And no man saw them more."

Then all men knew that these strange horsemen, victors at Lake Regillus, and messengers of victory almost in the same hour at Rome, were none other than the great Twin Brethren of the gods, Castor and Pollux, whose stars shine high in the eastern heavens in the winter nights of Rome. And great honour was done to them, and a feast was decreed to be observed each year on the day when the great battle by Lake Regillus was fought and won. So ended the last attempt to restore the kingship in Rome, and the city was left to her freedom and her growth.

CHAPTER IV

THE ROMAN ARMY

"Go," said Romulus, when he appeared as a god to the trembling Roman Senator, Proculus Julius—"go, tell the Romans that it is the will of heaven that my Rome should be the head of the world. Let them henceforth cultivate the arts of war, and let them know assuredly, and hand down the knowledge to posterity, that no human might can withstand the



STATUE OF GERMANICUS

Showing equipment of a Roman General of the early Empire

The Roman Army

arms of Rome." Never did a prophecy more thoroughly bring about its own fulfilment than this, if it were ever made. For centuries the Romans obeyed their founder, and cultivated the arts of war, till they were heads of the world, as Romulus predicted; and for centuries they cultivated no other arts but those of war, which was not so well either for them or for the world. In fact, it brought about Rome's ruin in the end, for the conquest of the Eastern world brought all the opportunities of luxury to men who had never been trained to appreciate beauty and splendour at their true value, and the rough, ignorant Roman ran riot in luxury till he was thoroughly corrupted by it, instead of using his new treasures with moderation and understanding, as a better instructed man would have done.

However, there can be no doubt of the success with which the arts of war were cultivated. Rome lived by and for her army; she made it the most perfect instrument of war that the world had ever seen, and, while she sometimes used it with brutal cruelty, it proved also, many a time, the school of all those virtues of steadfastness, and devotion to duty, and impregnable courage, which we have learned to associate with the Roman name. Her army, nine times out of ten, showed all that was best in Rome; only very rarely did it show the worst.

Further, we must realize that it was really the army that did the work. For, though Rome was so great a military power, her generals were very rarely of the first class. Julius Cæsar, of course, will always stand beside Alexander and Hannibal and Napoleon as one of the world's supreme captains, but no other Roman can be named as worthy to hold place beside him. The successful Roman general was usually a competent soldier, and little more; given competency, his magnifi-

Ancient Rome

cent infantry attended to the rest. The unsuccessful Roman general was very often a miracle of incompetency—indeed, he must have been, to make so miserable a use of his splendid material. Nor was the incompetent general by any means a rarity, as the many bloody defeats sustained by the legions, in spite of their steady valour, clearly show. In fact, Rome, like Britain, generally began her wars badly. By-and-by, muddling through by that stubborn determination of hers, she weeded out the incompetents and trained the likely men; and the legions, once they got a fair chance, turned the scale. But never in all her long wars of the Republic did Rome produce a captain to be named in the same breath with such a man as her great Carthaginian enemy Hannibal, until, at the very last gasp of the Republic, Julius Cæsar began to make war at an age when most men are thinking of laying aside the sword.

So if we want to know how Rome made herself mistress of the world, we have not to think so much of a few great captains with a heaven-sent genius for war, but rather of a great silent army, the most steadfast, the most enduring, the most adaptable tool of warfare that perhaps the world has ever seen, handled, on the whole, by merely average men, with here and there an unusually competent commander, and, not uncommonly, an unusually incompetent one. And in this chapter we want to take a peep at this great army which stood for all that was real and strong in Rome, which made Rome's Empire, and which saved it again and again.

Let us suppose, then, that we are to have the privilege of paying a visit to the camp of the two Consuls, Marius and Catulus, at Vercellæ, in the Northern Plain of Italy, just before the great battle in which they are to meet the invading hosts of the

The Roman Army

Cimbri. You could not have a finer chance of seeing a Roman army at its best, for the 32,000 men who are under the command of Marius (Catulus has 22,300) have been trained to the very highest point by the most patient and careful of commanders, and are, indeed, the first professional army that Rome has ever had. In all her great wars hitherto her army was really just a citizen militia, the infantry made up of the men who could afford a suit of armour, and the cavalry of the wealthier citizens who could maintain one of the horses which the State supplied. Each Consul levied his own army for the spring campaign, and the legions were disbanded whenever the campaign was over.

Now, however, Marius has changed all that. He promises pay to his men on discharge, and so he has got recruits who could never have afforded to serve in the old days; and he never seems to have any difficulty in getting as many more as he wants. His legions are never disbanded. The whole establishment of each legion, with its name, its number, and its traditions, is handed on year after year, and when the legion has to fill up the ranks to war strength, the whole framework is there ready. Moreover, he has done away with all the variety of weapons that used to be seen in the days when each citizen soldier brought his own equipment. Now the State provides the soldier's kit and weapons, and all the men of each particular unit of the service are equipped alike.

Here, then, is Marius's force of 32,000 men drawn up in battle array, ready to be inspected by the famous Consul himself, to whose staff we shall take the liberty of joining ourselves. As we ride up to the iron ranks we see that the habit of having regimental mascots is at least as old as the time of Marius, and that the goats and bears and monkeys that our soldiers love to

Ancient Rome

take with their regiments could be matched in the Roman army. High over the legions two great vultures circle in the air, and many a legionary gives an upward glance of recognition and satisfaction, when his centurion is not looking, to the big birds wheeling and screaming overhead. For the soldiers caught these two last year, just before they fought and beat the Teutones; and when they had made friends with them by feeding them well, they put brass collars round their necks and let them go. Ever since, the great birds have followed the legions, and the men have grown to look upon them as the luck of the army and the sign of victory.

The light-armed troops and the cavalry are stationed on either wing, and, as we ride along, we pass them first, though we need not pay so much attention to them. Instead of the little troop of inefficient native Roman cavalry that used to go with each legion, and be invariably beaten off the field in each battle, we have now a very different force. Wide on the wing are drawn up the light Numidian Horse, fierce sun-burnt lancers and bowmen from North Africa, on light, wiry Moorish horses—the most dangerous light cavalry in the world, as the Romans have often found to their cost. Next to them come the heavy Ligurian Horse, lancers and swordsmen, with helmets, breast and back plates, and shields; heavy men and heavy horses to charge other cavalry, or break up shaken infantry. Between them and the infantry of the line are the ranks of Balearic slingers, with their leathern slings, whose bullet, either of lead or of clay mixed with blood and goat's hair, can crush in helmet or corselet and shatter the bone behind. Beside them are the famous Cretan bowmen, who have a perpetual feud with the other islanders over the question whether the sling or the bow is the more efficient weapon.

The Roman Army

To-morrow they will have a good chance of settling it against the ranks of the Cimbri.

Now we have passed the wing of light armed troops, and here, in the centre, are the grim iron ranks that have so often trampled to victory through rivers of blood and over piles of dead. You may get rather a shock as you look at them at first. You expected—did you not?—to see a wall of iron, shield to shield right along the line. Here is something very different. The close-ranked, shoulder-to-shoulder way of fighting was never the Roman way, and is now less so than ever before. It was the Macedonian, with his long twenty-one-foot sarissa, or pike, who stood jammed tight against his next man, with pike after pike from the files behind sticking out in front of him, till his phalanx looked like a great steel-clad porcupine. The Roman fighter always liked open order, with a fair space round about him to swing his arm for the cast of the pilum, or javelin, with which he began the fight, and the cut and thrust of the deadly thirty-inch sword, short but heavy, with which he hewed his way to victory.

Each legion is now composed of 6,000 men, of whom 3,600 are heavy infantry, instead of the various smaller numbers that were once in use. The legion is divided into ten cohorts, which take the place of our battalions, and each cohort is subdivided into three maniples, corresponding to our companies. A maniple is made up of two platoons—centuries, they are called, though they only muster 120 men between them. The legion is commanded by a legate, who has under him six tribunes, whose subalterns are the centurions.

Now see how the men are arranged. They stand in three lines, eight file deep, which go by the names of the Hastati, the Principes, and the Triarii. The last are veteran soldiers, older and perhaps not so

Ancient Rome

agile as the ranks in front, but steady men who can be relied on to stop a rush when the barbarians have broken through by sheer weight. When you hear a Roman commander say, "Ventum est ad Triarios" (It has come to the Triarii), you know that the legion has its back to the wall, and you will see some fighting that is worth talking about. The three lines are not ranged exactly behind one another, but in a kind of chess-board fashion—between each two maniples of the front line there is a space, and in the second line a maniple is stationed so as to cover each of these spaces, while the maniples of the third line, again, are placed like those of the first. Each soldier in the ranks stands in a six-foot square of space, so that he has plenty of room to use his weapons freely.

As we pass along the line, you had better take a good look at the standards, for Marius has been making a change there, too. It was Romulus who gave the Roman army its first standard, and it was as simple as the army by which it was carried. For it was only a bundle of hay on the end of a pole, and because a bundle of hay was called a "manipulus," each company which marched under the manipulus was called a maniple. In the early Republican days each legion had five different kinds of standard—the eagle, the wolf, the minotaur, the horse, and the bear—but Marius has done away with all this confusion, and now there is just the one kind of standard for the legions. At the top of a pole, grasping an ornamental capital, a silver or golden eagle flaps his broad wings, while a silver thunderbolt is clutched in his talons. Henceforward the world will learn to know and dread the eagles, from farthest Britain to the Caucasus.

The new standards are regarded with the greatest reverence. In camp, the eagle rests in a special shrine. On the march it is carried by a picked soldier of the

The Roman Army

legion, the "aquilifer," but the senior centurion of the legion is responsible for its safety, and the legion which should lose its eagle would count itself, and be counted by others, for ever disgraced.

And now we shall have the chance of seeing, close at hand, the equipment of a legionary soldier. In an encounter with the Cimbri a day or two ago, Sextius Baculus, a private soldier, saved the life of a centurion and another private with the greatest gallantry. Now the wreath of oak-leaves, called the civic crown, which is the highest reward a general can give for such an action, is very seldom given to a private; on this occasion, however, perhaps to give a fillip to his soldiers' valour in view of the coming battle, Marius has decided to bestow it upon the brave legionary before the assembled army. The grim, heavy-faced, rough old general halts with his staff, and at the summons of a staff-officer, handed on by his centurion, Sextius Baculus steps forward from the ranks. We had better take a good look at him, for in person, equipment, and spirit this is the type of the men who made Rome queen of the world.

He is by no means a big man; you will see far bigger in the ranks of the Cimbri; but he is burly, square-shouldered, and deep-chested, standing solid on his feet, and with bare, muscular arms. The clean-shaven face is as hard and grim as if it were cut out of old oak, and altogether you would prefer to have this sunburnt son of Rome on your side rather than against you. His equipment is as plain and workmanlike as it can well be, for the Roman army is meant not for show, but for business. His head is covered with a perfectly plain round helmet, topped by a metal boss or button, kept firm on the head by cheekpieces which almost meet under the lower jaw, and bearing a band of metal of double thickness round the forehead,

Ancient Rome

and a projection behind to cover the neck. This, like all the metal-work of his equipment, is browned to a serviceable and inconspicuous tone. His body is guarded by a number of strips of iron which pass round the trunk, forming a kind of jointed breast-plate, and these are attached to the shoulder-pieces, similar strips of metal which pass over either shoulder and hang down in front and behind for several inches. His thighs are protected by strips of leather which hang from his waist, and his feet are shod with heavy sandals studded with nails, and bound on, well up the leg, with broad leathern thongs.

In his right hand the soldier carries a short, stout throwing-spear, the famous "pilum," which the Roman hurled against the enemy's ranks as he came to close quarters. It measures about six feet nine inches in length, and has a long, heavy iron point, whose socket comes about half-way down the shaft. This point used to be fixed to the shaft by two iron rivets, but Marius has replaced one of them by a wooden peg, which breaks when the pilum sticks in an opponent's shield, so that the shaft bends over and drags on the ground, hampering his movements. On his left arm Sextius bears the great oblong shield of the Roman legionary, four feet from top to bottom and two and a half feet from side to side, curved round at the edges to the shape of a half cylinder, so that it covers the whole of one side of his body. In their early days the Romans used a smaller round shield, but they have long given it up in favour of this oblong one. Though the shield is so large, it is not nearly so cumbrous as you might think, for it is made of cloth and calf-skin built up on a wooden framework, and is really wonderfully light. The boss in the centre of it has brazen thunderbolts shooting out from it, the only ornament in the whole equipment.



A ROMAN QUINQUEREME (page 35).

The Roman Army

Last of all comes the Roman's great weapon, the short sword which won so many battles. A leathern baldric passes over the soldier's left shoulder, and across his chest to his right hip, and there in its sheath hangs a straight, heavy sword, thirty inches long, with a sharp point and two keen edges. Its hilt is perfectly plain, with a simple cross-bar, not so much to guard the hand as to keep the fingers from slipping as the swordsman thrusts. Why do the Romans wear their swords on the right side, instead of on the left, as all modern soldiers do? Well, if you had to carry a shield four feet by two and a half on your left arm, you would soon find out the reason. The sword is carried where you can get at it most readily. It is only since the time of the terrible war against Hannibal that the Romans have universally taken to this short Spanish sword, which made such dreadful havoc in their own ranks at Thrasymene and Cannæ. Now they know there is no weapon to match it, and no soldiers can use it so well as they. For Marius, in the new drill which he has introduced, insists on his men being taught fencing by the masters of the gladiatorial schools. They are all taught that, though their sword has two sharp edges, they are never to use the edge if they can help it, but always to thrust with the point; for the thrust is both more deadly and exposes the swordsman less. To-morrow will see the test between the Roman style of the short sword and the thrust and the Cimbrian method of the long claymore and the swinging cut, and before the end of the day 120,000 Cimbrian dead, piled on the Raudine Plain—more than two for every Roman sword at work—will show the superiority of the legionary method.

We have kept poor Sextius Baculus standing for quite a long time before the ranks, while we have been

Ancient Rome

taking stock of his equipment; but now Marius, in his long red general's mantle, comes forward to where the brave soldier stands like an iron statue. A centurion beside him, distinguished by a low crest to his helmet, crowned with a tuft of red feathers, and bearing in his hand the vine-stock which is his mark of office, hands the general the simple crown of oak-leaves which the Romans prized as we do the Victoria Cross. Marius, holding it in his hand, speaks a few plain words of praise, and bids the soldiers in the ranks emulate the valour of their comrade; then, as Sextius bows his head, the general places the wreath around the battered iron helmet. The legionary straightens himself up again, salutes, and takes his place in the ranks once more. Not much of a ceremony, but the men will fight the better for it to-morrow. Incidentally it has given us the chance of seeing and studying the kind of man who won Rome's battles for her. "Had I such men," said Pyrrhus, the Red King of Epirus, the day after he had beaten the legions at Heraclea, "I would conquer the world." Very likely; but they were bred nowhere but on Roman soil, though his own phalangites were brave and steady men too.

Marius and his army, of course, are out for a battle in the open, and do not expect any siege-work, so we shall not see any of the really heavy siege-artillery which went with a Roman army when towns had to be captured. He has not with him the ram, with its huge wooden beam, tipped with a bronze or iron head, and swinging from a framework which moves up to the walls on wheels, covered by a "tortoise," whose shell is made of wood and raw hides—the dreaded weapon, irresistible as fate, before which so many proud cities have bowed and fallen. But inside the wall of the great camp to which the legions will presently return

The Roman Army

there are some of the lighter engines; for you never know what may happen, and it is best to be prepared. Here, for instance, is a light catapult, not designed, like the boys' catapult that has taken over its name, for throwing stones, but a kind of giant crossbow, for shooting heavy arrows. It will fling, to a distance of four hundred yards or so, a thick arrow four and a half feet long, that will smash through half a dozen men in rank behind one another.

There are no ballistas in the camp, but the ballista works on exactly the same principle as the catapult, only it fires big stones, fifty-three pounds in weight sometimes, and it lies back on its frame like a modern howitzer, to get high-angle fire, and heave its missiles over the walls upon the garrison within. Here, however, is the next thing to a ballista—a machine which carries a big sling, with a heavy stone in it, at the end of a long wooden arm that turns on an axle, and is weighted heavily at the other end. You wind back the long arm, as far as it will go, by a windlass, and pin it by a bolt. Then suddenly you draw the bolt, and the long arm flies up till it is checked by a thick leather pad on the frame of the machine. The sudden check sends the stone from the sling whirling away with all the force of the swing of the long arm. The recoil of this instrument is terrific, and the legionaries, who have their own grim jests among themselves, call it the "Onager," the "Wild Ass," because it kicks so hard.

And now, what is this thing coming along on a little travelling carriage drawn by two mules, and attended to by a couple of soldiers? Can it be a galloping maxim? Not exactly that, but the nearest thing the Romans possessed to such a gun. It is a galloping catapult, a light weapon which can be run about from point to point either for attack or for

Ancient Rome

defence, as the case may be—a very useful and workmanlike little tool, which any two legionaries from the ranks can handle. Its arrows, of course, are not so heavy as those of its big brother, nor is its range so great; but, on the other hand, it can be worked much more quickly, and might almost be looked upon as a quick-firer.

Altogether, you see, the Roman army is a wonderfully efficient organization, though I have only given you the merest glance at a few of the details of its equipment. The Romans went upon the principle of leaving nothing to chance if they could help it. They never camped, not even for a single night, without throwing up a fortified camp that would stand anything short of a regular siege, and everything else was attended to in the same solid, methodical way. Tools, weapons, everything that the soldiers used, might be plain and unpretentious indeed, but were all of the best and strongest. And it was this thoroughness of preparation, joined to the stubborn bravery of the Roman private, that so often turned the scale when the legions were engaged against heavy odds.

But meanwhile Marius has finished his inspection, and the troops are coming back to camp; so we must wish them a good night's rest before the battle, and good luck when they measure the short gladius tomorrow against the long claymores of the Cimbri.

CHAPTER V

ROME'S BATTLE-FLEET

WE have spent so much time over the Roman army because, after all, it was the army which was the chief weapon of the great city in her conquest of the world.

Rome's Battle-Fleet

But we must not forget that Rome owed a great deal to her fleet as well, and that in the long wars during which she was fighting for her very life against Carthage, it was the fleet that turned the scale in her favour at last. All the same, the Roman never was a sailor. He was always a soldier, who sometimes had to fight, very unwillingly, at sea. When a Roman felt that he had to do a thing, he did it thoroughly, and generally with success; and this was true of his sea-fighting as well as of other things. He took to the sea because he was obliged to; he made a fleet because he could not help himself; he used it with astonishing success; but he never used it as a seaman.

His naval victories were not sea-battles at all; they were land-battles fought at sea; and they were won, not by seamanship, but by the same methods of fighting which made the legions victorious on land. Roman seamanship was the kind of thing that allowed the Carthaginian Admiral, with his whole fleet and ten thousand men, to break the blockade of Lilybæum without the loss of a ship or a man, while the Roman fleet looked on, afraid to lift anchor in the wild gale which swept the Carthaginians safely into port. During the First Punic War, Rome lost, by sheer bad handling and neglect of seamanlike precautions, three entire fleets, with 700 ships of the line and 70,000 men.

All the same, Rome became a great naval power, and I have now to tell you how she did this. Early in her first great war with Carthage, she found that she must needs have a fleet—not the trifling little squadron of small vessels that she had kept up for a long time, but a real fleet, able to meet the Carthaginians on the open sea. For the war was being fought out in Sicily, and the army there had to be reinforced and supplied, while the Italian coasts had to be protected against Carthaginian raids. So the Romans set to

Ancient Rome

work to make a fleet just as they would have set to work to raise a new army.

Now you must know that in those days there were two chief kinds of warship. The Greeks, who were real sailors, had gradually developed a fast, smart, and handy middle-sized ship, called a trireme, because it had three rows of oars, one above the other. It had sails too, and when it was cruising, or making a passage, the trireme used its sails, and gave the rowers a rest; but when it was going into battle, masts and sails were struck, and, if possible, sent ashore, for the ship was handiest under oars alone.

Rome had already some triremes. But the trireme was getting out of date, because a bigger ship had been introduced. She had five banks of oars, and so was called a "pentereme," or "quinquereme." She was not nearly such a smart ship as the trireme, but, as a sea-castle, she was irresistible. A trireme had no more chance against a quinquereme in the kind of fighting that the Romans meant to go in for than a modern light cruiser would have against a super-Dreadnought. So quinqueremes, and plenty of them, had to be built, and the Roman dockyards were busy.

Fortunately, a Carthaginian quinquereme had been driven ashore on the Italian coast two or three years before, and had been salved. Now she served as a model, and the shipbuilding feat that followed might make our Admiralty green with envy, if the tale of it is true. In sixty days, so the Romans said, they built a fleet of a hundred five-bankers and twenty triremes, and you may believe them if you feel so inclined. I have my doubts.

Meanwhile, the crews were being trained. Thirty thousand land-lubbers had to be taught to keep time and length, to pull and back water, to spurt or to go easy, all like one man; and you can imagine the heart-

Rome's Battle-Fleet

breaking kind of task it was. The story says that great five-tiered stages were erected on the shore, and that the oarsmen were trained on these to swing, and pull, and manœuvre to the sound of the trainer's pipe. It sounds like a fairy tale, but perhaps it is true. One way or another the fleet was manned, and it cleared from port, bound for Sicily, almost as soon as the last vessel was in the water.

So now, if you please, we are going to go on board the flagship of the new Consul Gaius Duilius, and we shall see how the new fleet and the new crews behave. Let us take a look at our ship and get a general idea of her build and equipment. She is a big ship for the time, though she would look small enough beside a modern battleship. The noticeable thing about her is her length, for the warships are of quite a different build from the bluff-bowed merchantmen. Along the water-line she measures 168 feet; her breadth is only 18, and her depth from the deck to the keel, 26½. She draws 11½ to 12 feet of water, and her tonnage is 534.

Her long sharp bow projects just at the water-line, and bears three short, stout rams tipped with bronze. This is because the Carthaginian boats will have rams too, and one never knows but it may be necessary to use ours; but the Admiral doesn't mean to ram if he can help it. He has other things in his mind, as we shall see. On either side of the bow a great eye is painted, looking forward; for the ship must be able to see her way. Two anchors hang at the catheads, one of the usual shape, another shaped almost like a mushroom.

Now look along her deck. Down the centre line runs a long, narrow gangway, spreading out at bow and stern into a forecastle and a quarter-deck. On either side of the gangway the benches of the topmost bank of oarsmen run across to the side of the ship. There are 35 on each side, making 70 rowers for this

Ancient Rome

deck. The deck below will have 66, the next 62, the fourth 58, and the lowest 54, so that we have 310 oarsmen in all. As you can imagine, they are packed pretty close, and are none too comfortable. The oars range in length from the twenty-foot sweeps of the upper deck to the eight-foot paddles of the lowermost row. If the thalamite, as the Greeks called the rower of the lowest bench, has to pull the shortest oar, he makes up for it by having the poorest chance if anything goes wrong. Preserve me from being a thalamite when the enemy's ram comes crashing through the planking, and the water rushes in at the gaping hole, and the stricken ship heels and settles down!

Amidships rises the mainmast. When we get to sea it will bear a square sail, adorned with a picture of the Roman twins and their she-wolf nurse, to show that we carry the Admiral. Fore and aft are steps for two lighter masts which bear lateen sails to help us in head winds or in casting the ship's head round; with a fair wind we don't need them, and they are unstepped and the big square sail used alone. But near the bow we have an extra mast, the ugliest thing you can imagine. It is short and thick, and carries neither yard nor sail. Instead, a long gangway of stout timber is fastened to it by a hinge and collar at the foot of the mast, and drawn up nearly to the masthead at its upper end by a block and tackle. At the upper end there projects from the gangway a long, thick iron spike with a sharp point. It looks for all the world like a raven's beak, and our men call it the *Corvus*, the Raven. Every ship in the fleet is disfigured with this same monstrosity, and we have all been drilled in the use of it, and are full of curiosity as to how it will work in actual battle.

Now we are under way, and we had best draw a veil over the first two or three days at sea, with raw crews,



THE ARCH OF TITUS (page 40).
The sculptures commemorate the destruction of Jerusalem.

Rome's Battle-Fleet

and a lot of soldier-men on board who never saw the sea in their lives before. There is just one comfort, and that is that the long quinqueremes do not roll nearly so badly as you would have expected. The five banks of oars on either side steady them wonderfully. Nevertheless, the Consul and the soldiers are all very unheroically sick, and the oarsmen are to be pitied most of all, for, sickness or no sickness, the oars must not stop. If the Carthaginians had caught us on our first or second day out, there would have been a sad story to tell of our new fleet. But luck has been with us, and we have seen no enemy sail; and now we have got our sea-legs, and feel that we may make a fight of it after all.

Now we are off Cape Mylæ, on the north coast of Sicily, and we can see the smoke of the burning villages where the Carthaginian army is plundering on shore. And here comes their fleet, in very different trim from ours. Masts and sails are stowed, and 130 quinqueremes, cleared for action, come sweeping along with a very different stroke from that of our half-trained rowers. We know perfectly well what they will try to do. They are far faster and handier than we are, and their oarsmen can get a ship about before we should be half through with the job. So each galley will try to get on the flank of one of ours, and drive its beak home, in which case it means a galley lost for us. Or else their galleys will dodge our bows as we come on, and drive slantwise alongside us, drawing their own oars in at the last moment, and so smash right along our tiers, from bow to stern, breaking our oars and pitching our oarsmen in heaps upon one another. Then they can finish off the crippled ship at their leisure. It is very clever and seamanlike, but we are not seamen, and we do not mean to fight in that way at all.

Our enemies have thirty ships more than we have,

Ancient Rome

and they have detached that number of picked quinqueremes to make the first attack. A fine sight they make, as they come sweeping along, the foam flying from their crimson bows and from the hundreds of oar-blades. We lumber along straight ahead; but the men are stationed at the tackle of the Raven, and close behind that ungainly contrivance all our soldiers, on each galley, are gathered in order. Now the galley opposite us is within bowshot, and a few arrows fly from both ships; but this business is going to be settled by other weapons than arrows.

Now she sweeps obliquely past our bows. You can hear the hiss of the water from her ram, and the sobbing breath of her labouring rowers. Her starboard bow is almost touching our starboard bow, and our bow oars are gone for ever with thundering cracks; but the Consul raises his hand, a shrill blast comes from the trumpeter beside him, and the big gangway comes crashing down by the run, the long iron beak of it driving deep into our enemy's deck. They will not get the Raven to loose his prey in a hurry. Now the soldiers pour across the gangway, their centurion at their head. They are on the deck of the Carthaginian, and we have got what we wanted—a land fight at sea. Indeed, it is scarcely a fight, for the Carthaginian quinquereme has only her eighteen or twenty marines to meet five times the number of our legionaries.

The first rush clears her deck of all her fighting men, who are either cut down or thrown into the sea. A strong guard over the seamen and the rowers will keep them quiet, and they will be as willing to handle the ship for us as for their late masters. So the Raven's beak is levered out of the deck, and the gangway hauled up again, and the captured galley obediently makes her way, under the gentle persuasion of our prize crew, to the rear of the fleet.

Rome's Battle-Fleet

Meanwhile, the same thing has been happening all round, to the intense surprise and disgust of our enemies. It is, of course, a most unseamanlike business, but we are capturing the ships, and they are losing them. By-and-by, when they have lost fifty, while we have not lost a single ship, they conclude that it is better to live to fight another day, when they shall have had time to consider and meet this strange new way of fighting that we have invented. Their eighty surviving ships make off for Mylæ, greatly crestfallen, but at a speed which makes pursuit hopeless; and we anchor, to make rough repairs, and to attend to our wounded and dispose of our dead.

Such was Rome's first great sea-victory. With a raw fleet, and with crews as unseasoned as the wood of which the galleys were built, she had met and vanquished the greatest naval power of the world on its own element. Nothing was good enough for Admiral Duilius. A pillar, called the Columna Rostrata, because it was adorned with the "Rostra," or brazen beaks, of the captured vessels, was erected in his honour in the Forum. Moreover, stranger privileges, and more questionable, were conferred on him. It was decreed that when he went forth or returned home at night he should always be accompanied by the music of flutes, and by torch-bearers. To our minds this might seem to be a most refined and ingenious method of torture, and one is tempted to wonder whether the Patrician Senate might not be jealous of the Plebeian Consul who had won so great a triumph, and found this cruel way of avenging their order upon the plain soldier who had deserved well of the Republic. But Duilius was a brave man, and perhaps not even the din of his eternal flute-players could shake the nerves of an ancient Roman.

Ancient Rome

CHAPTER VI

A VISIT TO ROME IN A.D. 71: THE JOURNEY

Now we are going to pay a visit to the Eternal City, and since we have the privilege, unlike other travellers, of choosing the year, and the route, and all the circumstances of our journey, we are going to arrive in Rome just in time to see the splendid Triumph by which Vespasian and Titus intend to celebrate the capture of Jerusalem, and we shall travel by the most famous of all Roman roads, the Appian Way. Our long voyage from Alexandria on the big corn-ship *Canopus* is gradually drawing to a close. We have spent a couple of days in the splendid harbour of Syracuse, and have recalled the memories of the two great sieges of that noble city—the first, when Nikias and the magnificent Athenian fleet and army perished miserably, and the second when the stern Roman Marcellus put the town to fire and sword, and the great Archimedes died in the sack of the city he had tried in vain to save. We have entered the narrow strait that separates Sicily from Italy, and have run through it with a fair south wind, leaving Rhegium on our right. The course is now straight for 182 miles to the famous port of Puteoli, and, as our good ship is doing a steady seven knots, we shall reach harbour in about twenty-six hours, if the wind holds.

A day and night of perfect sailing brings us to the Bay of Naples. We round the Cape of Minerva, leaving on our left the lovely island of Capreæ, round which the memories of the Emperor Tiberius and his vile pleasures still seem to hover. On our right lies the shapely cone of Vesuvius, green and vine-clad,



TEMPLE OF MATER MATUTA

(An old Italian Goddess of the Dawn. The temple is supposed by some to be that of Portunus, the God of Harbours)

A Visit to Rome: The Journey

giving no warning yet of that dreadful burst of fiery destruction that in a few years will make the beautiful country at its base a waste and desolation. There is Pompeii, and about two miles beyond it you can see the villa of our good friend Publius Fannius Synistor, where we shall stay for a night before we travel on with him to his town house in Rome.

The good folks of Puteoli are already crowding down to the quay to see the arrival of the corn-ship, for they know us from afar by the fact that we have not lowered our topsail as we passed the Cape of Minerva. No other merchantman dare enter the bay without shortening sail; but the Alexandrian corn-ships have the privilege of coming in under full press of canvas. Now our sailors have got the anchor ready, and as we sweep in between the mole-heads and round to, topsail and mainsail are furled, and our cable runs out with a roar and a splash. Our host's four-wheeled family chariot is waiting for us and our belongings, and we lumber away along the shore road by the slopes of Vesuvius to the villa shining white in the warm sunshine on the green hill-slopes.*

At the gate Publius is waiting to receive us, for he has seen the chariot creeping up the slope, and we clatter into the courtyard and get down, glad to be able at last to stretch our tired limbs. Publius's villa is quite a small and unpretending one, half dwelling-house, half farm, and he only comes down to it now and again to see that the wine-making and olive-

* The villa described is that discovered at Bosco-reale, about two miles from Pompeii, and excavated in 1894-95. The silver vessels mentioned were found as stated, along with the skeleton of the lady of the house and those of two of her slaves, in the hall of the wine-presses, which had been prepared in haste as a room for her use. Publius Fannius Synistor is the name of the real owner of the villa, Maxima the name inscribed on some of the articles of the silver treasure.

Ancient Rome

pressing are going on all right; for a good part of his income is drawn from his vines and olive-groves on this pleasant hillside. On our left hand in the courtyard stand the living-rooms of the house, in front are the wine and olive presses, and on our right the store-rooms with the great fermenting vats and the big earthenware jars where the wine and the oil are kept and matured.

The first thought, of course, when our belongings have been stowed away, is the bath, and Publius leads us through the house to where the three chambers of the bathroom lie. The bath has three stages—cold, tepid, and hot—and we come out from the last thoroughly refreshed after our journey. We shall have no company, for the villa is so small that there is only accommodation for Publius, with his wife Maxima, and our two selves. There are slaves, of course, but no one bothers as to the kind of lodging they may have. The public room where we take our evening meal is not very large, but it is prettily painted in fresco, and one painting of a rustic temple is well worth looking at.

The horseshoe table, where we recline and chat over our journey as we eat and drink, is tastefully decorated and gay with flowers, but the chief glory of the room is the silver plate. Publius and his wife rather pride themselves on their taste in silver, and there are some pieces that even a Roman grandee might not despise. Look at this beautiful bowl, with the symbolic figure of Africa, and these cups with the figures of the Emperor Augustus receiving homage from the barbarians, and the sacrifice to Jupiter of the Capitol. You will scarcely match them nearer than Rome. Here, again, is a curious old goblet decorated in the strangest taste. All round its sides stand figures of the Greek poets and philosophers;

A Visit to Rome: The Journey

but they are represented by grinning skeletons. It is a regular Dance of Death, and one rather wonders that Publius and his wife care to have such a thing on their table; it seems ominous. Yet neither our kind host nor his hospitable wife realize how true the omen is, nor that before many years have passed Maxima, fleeing with her slaves from the deadly fire-shower of Vesuvius, will heap together these costly treasures, the grim skeleton goblet among them, in a corner of the wine-press room, and, perishing there beside them, be found long ages after, a skeleton herself. No thought of that terrible day crosses their minds, or ours, to-night.

Supper and conversation over, we go early to bed, for we have a long and tiresome journey to begin to-morrow. The Roman does not believe in big bedrooms, and our cubicles are tiny, and perhaps just a little stuffy, while the beds are not much bigger than our bunks on the *Canopus*; but weariness is the best opiate, and we sleep soundly enough this first night in a Roman house.

A lovely morning sees us all early afoot, and after a good meal we start in the four-wheeled chariot, drawn by sturdy mules. We are well armed, and Publius has already sent word for several of his slaves from Rome to meet us half-way at Anxur, and escort us into the city, for the low-lying part of the road through the Pomptine Marshes has an evil name for highwaymen and rascals of all kinds. To-day we have to journey by cross-roads, first along the bay to Neapolis, and then, turning inland up country, to Capua. At that once famous city we shall strike the Appian Way, and have good solid pavement beneath us all the way to Rome.

The new day finds us rolling through the gate of Capua on the broad pavement of the great road.

Ancient Rome

The white stone ribbon runs on for mile after mile in front of us, mostly downhill, for we are making for the sea once more. Twenty-one miles of easy driving and we are at Sinuessa, where we shall take our midday meal, with the blue waters of the Tyrrhene Sea rolling almost to our feet. The inevitable siesta takes up the hot hours of early afternoon, and we start again for our next stage to Formiæ. We can see the famous watering-place at the head of the beautiful bay from a long distance off—the long white street by the shore, and the villas embowered in green on the slopes behind. Publius points out to us the one which used to belong to Cicero, and we pass not far from the very spot where Mark Antony's bravo's overtook and slew the great orator. The shadows of evening are beginning to fall as we drive through the streets of the busy little town to our inn.

Our next day is the most anxious one of the journey. From Formiæ we follow the winding road as it strikes inland through the Cæcuban hills where the vines, laden with their purpling clusters, cling to endless rows of elm-trees. Beyond the hills, we turn seaward once more, and, as we near Anxur, the road shows us a fine piece of Roman skill and determination in the overcoming of difficulties. At this point the best track for the road used to be blocked by the great cliff of St. Angelo, so that wayfarers had to take a stiff climb and descent to avoid the obstacle; but of late years the emperors have cut back the whole cliff for 120 feet, and a beautiful smooth roadway sweeps round the face of the great rock above the echoing waters.

At Anxur, four of Publius's slaves, armed and mounted, are waiting for us, and a mile or two farther on begins the danger zone. Before us, for nearly twenty miles, stretch the dreary Pomptine Marshes.

A Visit to Rome: The Journey

Side by side with the road, which cannot be kept up here so well as on the more solid ground, runs a canal, and many passengers prefer to travel this stage by canal-boat rather than risk the road. For not only is the surface poor, but the whole district is haunted by daring robbers who stick at nothing, from cutting the wayfarer's throat to kidnapping him bodily and selling him as a slave. The canal-boats are perhaps safer, but even they have been held up often enough. We have our own guard, however; the road is very busy with the crowds who are thronging Romewards for the Triumph, and special military patrols have been put on the dangerous parts of the way; so we stick to our family coach, and, without any attack, reach the end of the marshes at Appii Forum, where we pass the night. To-morrow we shall see Rome.

The last stage is over ground sacred to every true Roman. Shortly after we leave Appii Forum a range of blue hills lifts its crests far ahead, and these, Publius tells us, are the Alban Hills, on whose slopes rose the first settlement of the Latins, Alba Longa, the mother of Rome. Now the road begins to rise to the long steep slope of Aricia, beyond which we shall see the Alban Lake on our right, and get our first glimpse of the distant walls and temples of the great city. But we have first to run the gauntlet of the pest of Aricia. The professional beggars of Rome, a countless horde, know well that the steep Arician slope obliges even the fastest of chariots to take it at a walking pace, so that the traveller has no escape from their deafening cries and importunities. To-day, with so many people travelling, they are out in full force. The road all the way up the hill is lined on either side with blind, halt, maimed, and sick, with sturdy beggars and walking skeletons. It is no use to refuse them; they only pester you the more, unless a smarter or more luxurious

Ancient Rome

coach or litter calls off their attention. The best way is to scatter a handful of small cash among them at once.

You do so, and behold a miracle, or many miracles! Blind men suddenly regain their sight, lame men let down crippled legs that have become sound in a moment, withered arms are swiftly stretched out, ghastly sores, that made you sick to look at, are forgotten (they can be easily painted up again); and the whole filthy gang is tied into a struggling, snatching, cursing knot. Meanwhile, you gain a few yards, and before they have picked up the last denarius, another family coach is coming up the hill behind you, and attracts the wolves.

Now, from the slopes beyond Aricia, we can see our journey's end. Beneath our feet stretches for mile after mile a broad plain, the Roman Campagna. Away to the north and east it is bounded by the long blue line of the Sabine Hills, with Mount Soracte standing out conspicuous beyond the city. Rome itself lies in the centre, its seven hills crowned with gilded temple roofs and shining marble walls and columns, its winding river flashing back the sunlight. But the ancient walls of the city are almost lost in the huge suburbs. The whole plain, almost to your feet, is dotted over with villas and gardens, which stretch away on all sides of the city as far as the eye can reach. Straight lines are drawn across the great expanse of building and greenery, converging upon the heart of the city as the spokes of a wheel converge upon its hub. These are the great roads, and, more wonderful still, the great aqueducts, which bring the waters of the neighbouring hills to supply the countless fountains and public baths.

Descending to the plain, our road runs straight as an arrow for ten miles to the city. On either side of

A Visit to Rome: The Journey

the way are the tombs of the noble families whose names are almost an index to the history of Rome. The villas begin to crowd closer together, and the gardens grow smaller. Now come streets, though we are still beyond the walls, and the roadway bears an endless stream of chariots, litters, waggons, horsemen, and foot-passengers. Now the blare of a trumpet is heard, and a cohort, marching south, clanks past through the dust, everything else promptly clearing the way for the iron files. They are men worth seeing, bronzed and lean from hard campaigning; for they are not long home from Palestine and the siege of Jerusalem.

Here is the dark Porta Capena towering in front of us. We pass under the gloomy archway, perpetually weeping from the leakage of the Marcian aqueduct that passes overhead, and we are in Rome at last. In a kind of romantic dream we drive past the ancient wall of Servius Tullius, turn to the right between the Cælian and Palatine hills, and along the Velia to the slope of the Esquiline hill, where our friend's town house is situated.

CHAPTER VII

A VISIT TO ROME: THE TOWN HOUSE AND THE CITY

THE town house of our friend Publius Synistor is a much more elaborate affair than the little country villa at Pompeii. Of course it is by no means a great mansion, like some of the houses in the neighbourhood. Cicero's house on the Palatine cost him £30,000, and Cicero was not a grandee, but only a successful advocate. There are some houses not far away which have cost sums from £100,000 up to half a million. All the same, though Publius is a prudent man who makes no pretence of splendour, he has a good average

Ancient Rome

specimen of a comfortable gentleman's house, and we shall get quite a fair idea of the Roman home when he shows us through it.*

The building covers a whole street-block, or "island," as the Romans call it; but that does not mean that Publius himself occupies the whole. The average Roman does not mind so much about the outside of his house, so long as the inside pleases him, and Publius has planned his house so that the frontage and the two sides are divided into little shops, which are let to various tenants, and bring him in a good round sum every year. We knock at a door between two of these shops, and after we have waited a moment in the narrow vestibule till the porter has taken a glance at us through his spy-hole in one of the door-posts, the leaves of the door slide back in their groove and we enter the inner hall, stepping across a threshold inscribed with the word "Salve!" (Welcome) in mosaic.

This inner hall leads us to what in old Republican days was the chief room of every Roman house. We have a greater variety of rooms now, but the "atrium," as it is called, still keeps a kind of official position in the house. It is a large oblong room, lit only from the centre of the roof, where there is a square opening, which admits light, fresh air, and all the rain that is going. Beneath this roof-window lies an open tank bordered with coloured marbles, into which the rain from the house roof pours through terra-cotta spouts—a picturesque and cool arrangement, but decidedly damp and unwholesome, especially in rainy weather. The floor is laid with mosaic pavement, and the walls are painted with a crimson dado, and with frescoes

* The house described is really that known as the House of Pansa at Pompeii. It may be taken as fairly representative of the dwelling of a moderately well-to-do Roman.

A Visit to Rome: The Town House

of landscape and legend. Near the tank stand the images of the household gods, and a little altar, consecrated to them, which is supposed to typify the hospitable hearth of the house. Round the atrium are grouped six bedrooms, small and stuffy, like most Roman sleeping-rooms.

At the far end of the atrium heavy curtains are hung from a row of four pillars. Drawing the central curtain aside, we enter a small room, gorgeously decorated with paintings and floored with beautiful mosaic. It is the room where all the family records are kept, and its sumptuousness shows the importance which a Roman household attached to its history. On the left side of this sacred chamber is the little library of the master of the house, with a cabinet of antique gems and coins in which he takes great pride; on the right, beyond a lobby, lies a small breakfast-room.

The lobby leads us out into a beautiful open court. Round the four sides of it runs a broad shady veranda, up whose pillars climbing plants twine their tendrils; and several other bedrooms open on this gallery. In the centre of the court, and embowered in flowering shrubs, lies the basin of a fountain which sends its jet of clear water from the Sabine hills high into the sunlight. One or two graceful statues rise among the greenery around the fountain, and altogether, the shade, the coolness, and the pleasant tinkling of the falling waters make this one of the most attractive parts of the house, especially on a day of blazing sunshine.

The large dining-room, with its horseshoe table, opens off this court to the right; while on the other side of the court, behind the bedrooms, lie the kitchen and the other workrooms of the house. Last of all, we pass between the pillars at the back of the court

Ancient Rome

into the garden, which is laid out in formal beds, gay with colour, and backed by a handsome colonnade, in the centre of which stands a kind of summer lounge, where meals are often brought when the fine weather tempts one to live out of doors.

Such is the house where we shall live for a while in Rome, and you may take it as a fair specimen of the home of a good, well-to-do Roman citizen of the upper middle-class. On the whole, while it has a good deal of dignity, the luxurious folks of later ages might object that it inclined to be chilly and draughty, and altogether lacking in the cosiness that really makes a house home; but the Roman citizen has never been accustomed to anything else, and finds no fault with arrangements that would make moderns shudder. What would a lady think to be told that, in the midst of all her splendid frescoes and mosaics, poor Maxima has not even a scrap of looking-glass to dress her back hair by! The polished silver thing that she calls a mirror is exquisitely embossed and chased, it is true, but for any toilet purpose it is a mere scorn and derision.

You must not think, however, that all these lords of the earth, the free Roman citizens, are housed as well as the good Publius. There are something like 45,000 tenement blocks in Rome—huge four and five storey abominations, the upper storeys often built of wood, and therefore continually in danger of catching fire. Away down on the low flats by the Tiber, damp and fever-haunted, or in the Suburra just below our feet, street after street, narrow, winding, filthy, consists of nothing but these hateful warrens, in which thousands of human beings are crowded together under conditions that make health impossible and cleanliness and decency mere fantastic dreams. There is a very seamy side to the grandeur of Imperial Rome, as a five

A Visit to Rome: The Town House

minutes' stroll through the Suburra will quickly show you. Perhaps in that respect Rome is no worse than other great cities. Thebes and Babylon no doubt could match her; and if ever, in far-off misty Britain, there should rise (impossible fancy as it seems) a city as great as Rome, there will be the same mixture there of splendour and squalor, velvet and rags, marble and mud.

Anyhow, there is no question of Rome's splendour wherever she makes up her mind to be splendid. You will get an instance of that as we take a morning stroll through the city. We saunter down from the Esquiline towards the outer wall by the Via Labicana, and here, almost at the very start of our walk, is a building that strikes one with admiration. A noble front, encrusted with costly marbles, spacious halls and waiting-rooms, floored with mosaic, surrounded with statues of emperors and heroes, walls covered with brilliant frescoes, and at the side a small but gorgeous temple of Jupiter—what can it be? It is the headquarters of Battalion No. II. of the City Police and Fire Brigade! Rome has seven battalions of these magnificently lodged gentry, each with its own fine establishment; and if you think this fine, you should see Main Headquarters, where the 1st Battalion and the Central Administration are housed!

Talking of the police and fire brigade reminds one of the work they have to do. They may be handsomely lodged, but in Rome, as elsewhere, and perhaps even more in Rome than elsewhere, "a policeman's lot is not a happy one." To tell you the truth, the force is not popular in the Eternal City. The Prefect of Police may be a very mighty man, and, indeed, he usually advances from his post to be Governor of Egypt, and then Prefect of the Prætorium, which is the highest honour open to a Roman knight; but that

Ancient Rome

does not hinder the unwashed multitude from jeering at him and his watchmen, and calling "Tar-bucket!" after them as they go down the street. The reason for this vulgar nickname is that each fireman, when called out on duty, carries, along with his pick and axe, a water-bucket woven of wicker-work, and made water-tight by being smeared with tar.

As firemen, the "tar-buckets" have never any lack of work. Rome is continually burning, in some quarter or another. It is only a matter of six years since the great fire of Nero's day swept away two-thirds of the whole city, and there are huge blackened spaces still to show where the fire was worst. But every now and then there is a big blaze somewhere in the town, and smaller fires occur almost every day. Sometimes they occur so conveniently for their owners that unkind neighbours smile behind their hands when the burnt-out householder talks about his losses. There are no insurance companies, but if you go about the thing neatly, and have made yourself useful in your neighbourhood, your friends will subscribe enough to give you a better house than the one you have lost. Look at this smart new house, for instance. It belongs to a rather shady gentleman named Tongilianus, and it cost him, or rather the friends out of whom he squeezed the money, 10,000 sesterces. The house that he used to live in, before the ever-to-be-lamented fire which obliged him to build this new one, cost 200! Misfortune, you see, is sometimes a blessing in disguise.

But besides their duties as firemen, the police have a big, and indeed an almost hopeless task, as guardians of the public safety. Rome is a huge city; it has the usual proportion of rascals in its vast population; perhaps it has even more than the usual proportion, being, as it is, the centre of the whole world. And

A Visit to Rome: The Town House

there is one circumstance that makes it very difficult to preserve order, and to keep the streets safe. Perhaps some day in the far-off future a great genius will arise who will invent some method of lighting the streets at night, but at present there is no sign of him. Rome has not so much as one solitary public lamp in all her miles of crowded streets. Imagine a city of, shall we say, a million and a half of people, ranging from the greatest wealth to the most desperate poverty, without one spark of light to guide the wayfarer! He may carry his own light, of course—a smoking, dripping torch, or a miserable apology for a lantern, with a bronze frame and horn sides, but such makeshifts only make darkness visible.

The result is that, whenever the evening shadows begin to fall, all shops are shut and bolted, and the dark and gloomy streets present a very suspicious and sinister appearance. If you go abroad much after sunset, you go at your own risk, and you had better go well armed and with a guard of your own slaves; for cut-throats and pickpockets abound. Many a man who set out in the dark, merely to go from one street to another, has made a much longer journey than that, and has been fished out of the Tiber half-way to Ostia next morning. Nor is this the only danger. A couple of slaves and a torch may protect you against the thieves, but if you happen to meet a gang of young bloods of the upper class coming home from a supper-party where the wine has got above the wit, you had better take to your heels, for it is not a couple of slaves who will protect you! Only the other night one of Publius's neighbours, a most respectable man, was set upon by a party of these drunken rowdies, youths of consular and knightly families, and was insulted, beaten, stripped, and left lying senseless on the ground, so that he was nearly frozen to death.

Ancient Rome

When the police found him in the morning. Of course the "vigiles" do their best, but the task is quite beyond them, and nothing but light, and plenty of it, will ever make the streets of Rome safe.

But we have spent enough time over the police and the rascals of Rome, and we turn city-wards again. We pass along the road between the Esquiline and Cælian hills, to where the builders are working on the site of the Flavian Amphitheatre, and then turn southwards between the Cælian and the Palatine and pass the Circus Maximus, the huge enclosure where the chariot-races take place. That house just overlooking the Circus was made part of the Imperial Palace by the Emperor Caligula, who was so fond of chariot-racing and jockeys that he wanted to live as near the race-course as possible. Now it has been turned into a school for the pages of the Court, and you can see some of the young aristocrats at their games. They seem very much like other schoolboys, after all. See, some of them have been scribbling on the walls: "Corinthus is leaving school!" "Marianus Afer is leaving school!" What became of Corinthus and Marianus Afer in the big world, I wonder? One young rascal has a taste for art, it seems. Here is his drawing—a donkey turning a mill; and what is this he has written underneath? "Work, little ass, as I have worked myself, and you shall have your reward." Boys will be boys, even though their school stands where a Roman Emperor dwelt, and bears the awe-inspiring name of the Pædagogium.

Now we turn to the right up the Vicus Tuscus towards the Forum Romanum, the centre of the city's life. As we pass along the street we meet a constant stream of wayfarers, while an equally constant stream flows in the same direction as that in which we are going. Here is a senator, looking down with supreme

A Visit to Rome: The Town House

contempt on the plebeian crowd, as he passes in his litter, borne high on the shoulders of his slaves, towards the Forum. Behind him follows a perfect crowd of his retainers and hangers-on, who live on the pickings that he flings to them, and shout for him in public, and do all his dirty work in private.

Here comes another litter, more gorgeous still. In old times it would have been closed, for a Roman matron of the great days of the Republic kept herself very much to herself. It was her glory that she "stayed at home and spun wool," and when she was obliged to go abroad she went as quietly and unobtrusively as possible. But times are changed, and the Roman ladies go everywhere, have a voice in every question and a finger in every mischief, and pride themselves on drawing the gaze of every eye when they parade their splendours through the city. So Julia, or Sempronia, or whoever she may be, sits unabashed in her open litter, her arms and fingers glittering with gold and jewels, her very sandals flashing with precious stones, the picture of insolent pride. I wonder how many blows and tears that magnificent toilet of hers, and that miraculous piece of hair-dressing that crowns her head, cost her poor slaves this morning. For a proud Roman dame would never deign to exchange words with such cattle as her slaves; a sign with the finger is the utmost condescension by which she will reveal her will, and if she is misunderstood, the lash is the least reward for the poor waiting-woman's blunder.

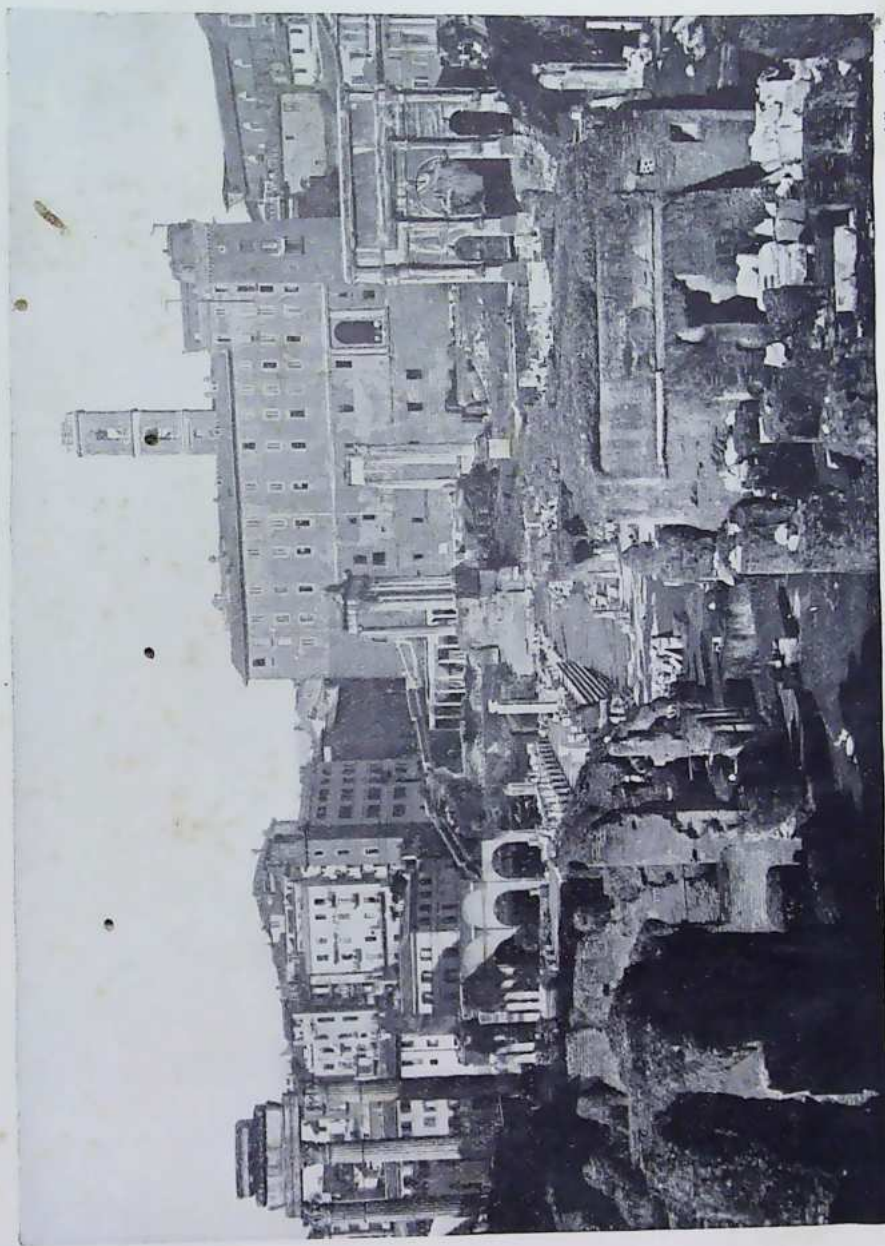
Take care how you tread, for this street is absolutely the worst paved way in Rome. The contract for it was given to Verres, that rascal whom Cicero prosecuted for his cruelty and swindling in Sicily; and he cheated the city over it, as he always did. In fact, it is so bad that Verres himself never would walk over it, but always preferred to go round by another way.

Ancient Rome

Look at that fellow going past swathed in a long white robe of the finest Egyptian linen. The shaven head, the thin bronzed features, and the furtive look tell you that he is a priest of Isis, the great Egyptian goddess whose worship has become so popular in Rome of late. The priests of Isis are men to be on your guard against, for all the superstition and wickedness of Rome have drawn to this strange Oriental faith, and if there is any mischief stirring in the city, it will be strange if you do not find a priest of Isis at the centre of it.

But now we have reached the Forum. Look around well, for nowhere in the world will you see so much splendour and wealth. On your right hand, as we pass into the corner of the Forum, stands the temple of Castor and Pollux, built on the very site of the spring where the great Twin Brethren watered their horses as they rode in with the news of the victory at Lake Regillus. Splendid as it is, however, it is completely dwarfed by the huge building on the left. This is the great Court-House, the Basilica Julia, begun by Julius Cæsar and completed by Augustus. If you can squeeze in through the crowd (for a famous case is being heard), you will see the eighty judges seated on the bench, all the most famous lawyers of the Empire arrayed on either side beneath, for prosecution or defence, and the vast hall and galleries packed almost to suffocation with interested spectators.

Close beside you, as you stand between the Temple of the Twins and the Basilica, is the spot where one of the darkest tragedies of Roman history befell. Here, in early days, stood a line of butcher's stalls, and it was from one of these stalls that Virginius snatched the knife wherewith he struck his fair young daughter Virginia to the heart, when nothing else could save her from slavery and shame. On your left



Alinari, photo

THE ROMAN FORUM (p. 56)

(Extreme left, pillars of the Temple of Castor and Pollux. Centre, pillars of Temple of Saturn and Temple of Vespasian. Right, Arch of Septimius Severus. Between Temple of Castor and Pollux and Temple of Saturn, the remains of the Basilica Julia)

A Visit to Rome: The Town House

hand, enclosed by a marble balustrade, is another spot sacred in the ancient traditions of Rome. For it is written that in the days of old a great chasm opened in the midst of the Forum, and could by no means be filled up; and when the counsel of the gods was sought, answer was given that the chasm would never close until what was most precious in Rome was cast into it. Then some were for throwing one rich treasure, and some another, into the gulf, but all to no avail; when at last Marcus Curtius, a noble Roman youth, dressed himself in full armour, mounted his charger, and crying that the most precious thing in Rome was the life of its youth, spurred his steed across the Forum and leaped, horse and man, into the dark abyss. And forthwith the gulf closed, and great awe fell upon all who beheld, and the place is held sacred even unto this day.

Turn now to your left and look towards the western end of the Forum, past the Lacus Curtius, as it is called, and the great pillars that adorn the square. Behind all, and closing the view to the west, towers the Capitoline hill, bearing on its southern spur a group of splendid buildings, the Temple of Concord, the Temple of our new Emperor Vespasian, the Portico of the Twelve Gods, the solid masonry of the Public Record Office, and, dominating and crowning everything, the superb Temple of Jupiter of the Capitol, the Father-God of Rome. There, on the northern spur of the hill, is the ancient citadel of Rome, and beside it the Temple of Juno Moneta, where the coinage is struck, and whence the word Mint shall be used henceforth as the name of all such places. On the gloomy rock face of this spur is the Tullianum, the horrible prison where offenders against the State languish out their lives, or die swift and violent deaths.

Ancient Rome

Beneath the Capitoline, and just behind the Forum, stands the beautiful Temple of Saturn. And here, right across the western end of the square, runs a marble balustrade and terrace, decorated along its face with the brazen beaks of captured galleys. This platform is the famous Rostra, from which the leaders of Rome address the gatherings of the people in time of stress and excitement. Many a time the Forum has rung with the winged words spoken by men like Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus, or later by Cicero and his rival orator Hortensius, from this famous terrace. Nor has it been without its tragedies, as well as its triumphs of oratory. Here were exposed the seyered heads of the victims in those mad welters of bloodshed that marked the successive supremacies of Marius and Sulla, and here the head and hands of Marcus Tullius Cicero, supreme of all speakers who have used the Latin tongue, were nailed, by order of his slayer, Mark Antony, to the balustrade that had echoed to his great orations. It suggests what Roman manhood and womanhood had fallen to in those days when one remembers that a soldier like Antony thus derided his fallen foe, and that Antony's wife Fulvia came forward to the Rostra, looked scornfully upon the dead face, and then, drawing a golden hairpin from her headdress, thrust it through the tongue that had once been so eloquent in the cause of Rome.

At the south end of the Rostra stands an inconspicuous stone, which yet has its own interest; for this is the Golden Milestone, and from it all the roads of the world are measured. The curious column at the other end of the terrace is an old and famous memorial. It is the Duilian Column, erected to commemorate the great victory won by our old friend Gaius Duilius (him who was always to be accompanied by flute-players) over the Carthaginian fleet at Mylæ;

A Visit to Rome: The Town House

and these ugly monsters projecting from it are the rams of the Carthaginian galleys captured in that great victory.

Glance now along the north side of the Forum before we turn homewards again. Standing back a little from the open square is the Senate House. It has no very special interest, for it is comparatively new—at least, it is only 120 years old. The famous old building which had heard all the debates and witnessed all the triumphs and tragedies of 500 years, which had seen all heads bowed when the news of the dreadful slaughter of Cannæ arrived, and had echoed to the shouts of joy that hailed the victory of Zama, was burned in 52 B.C. during a riot which rose over the funeral of that most abandoned scamp, Publius Clodius. Apart from its memories, the old building had not much to commend it. It was the chilliest place in Rome, for even in mid-winter there was no means of heating it, and the stately senators sat and shivered, with chattering teeth and red noses, no matter how warm the debate might wax. On one bitter January day in Cicero's time, the cold was so unbearable that the Speaker had to dismiss the Senate, and it is sad to have to tell that the vulgar crowd in the Forum, instead of sympathizing with the chilly legislators, laughed and jeered at their blue pinched faces and shaking hands. The new building is more comfortable than the old, but the glory has departed, though the comfort has increased. Nobody cares now what the Senate may say or do.

In front of the Senate House lies a slab of black marble, guarded by two lion-crowned piers, and fronted by an altar. The famous "Black Stone" of Rome is one of its most sacred relics, for here, as our fathers have told us, lie that which was mortal of Romulus, who founded the city, since that day when he himself

Ancient Rome

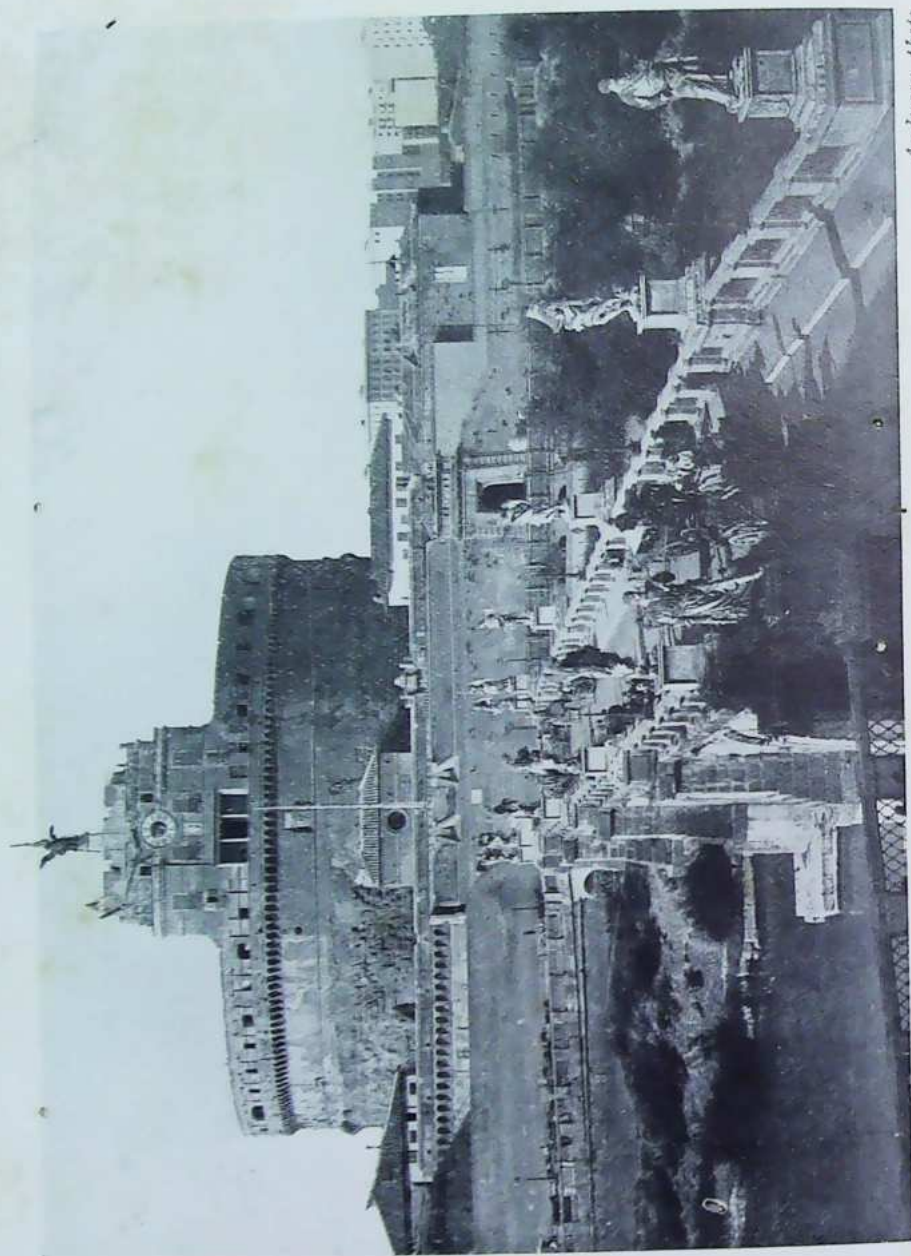
was translated to heaven, and became one with the gods. East of the Senate House is the little Temple of Janus, the two-faced god, whose gates may never be shut save when Rome is at peace with all the world. Beyond it runs the Argiletum, the booksellers' street of Rome, where all the book-fanciers come to buy the costly rolls of parchment that make libraries the luxury of the few and wealthy. Another stately Court-House, the Basilica Æmilia, completes the circuit of the Forum.

Perhaps we have seen enough for one day. At all events, we have been at the heart of Rome, and we have seen more splendours crowded and heaped together than we are ever likely to see in any other spot of equal size in all the world. Besides, if we are to see the Triumph of Vespasian and Titus, which will take place in a few days, we need not weary ourselves out beforehand with sight-seeing. So we leave the Forum, with all its memories of glory and disaster, heroism and shame, and, passing along the Sacred Way, we stroll eastwards home to the house of Publius on the Esquiline.

CHAPTER VIII

THE TRIUMPH

Now we are to have the chance of seeing the most splendid sight that even the Eternal City can ever show us. For you must know that the Romans, a race of soldiers, had decreed for their victorious generals the privilege of passing in triumph with their armies through the city, on their return from the wars. Only, as was most meet, this honour, which was the highest Rome could give, was most jealously guarded; nor was it bestowed for trifling feats of war,



Anderson, photo

HADRIAN'S TOMB AND AELIAN BRIDGE
(Now Castle and Bridge of St. Angelo)

The Triumph

until in later days some of the emperors, mad with pride, dishonoured it to be the plaything of their own folly. Thus, Caligula celebrated a triumph for having made the legions gather shells on the shores of the Channel, and Nero because he had gained a prize at the Olympic Games by singing on the public stage. But for a real triumph the conditions were severe. The victor must have commanded independently through the campaign. He must have been victorious in all his battles, and pressed every advantage to its utmost; and he must have led his victorious army safely home. Above all, a true mark of the bloodthirsty Roman, his army must have slain, in a single battle, at least 5,000 of the enemy.

The triumph that we are about to witness is an imperial one, but it is no mockery, like that of Caligula or Nero. For the Emperor Vespasian and his noble son Titus have been in deadly wrestle with an enemy, not strong in numbers, but strong with all the courage of despair; and the siege of Jerusalem, which Titus has victoriously concluded, has been one of the most terrible in the long list of terrible sieges that the legions have carried through. There is every likelihood, too, that the Emperor and his son will make their triumph the most glorious that Rome has ever witnessed; for though Vespasian may be miserly, Titus knows the value of display in maintaining the popularity which he has known so well how to gain.

All the arrangements have now been made. The Emperor, with his two sons, Titus and Domitian, have been living beyond Tiber, outside the city walls; for, by ancient custom, no victorious general can pass the city gate until his claim has been granted, without forfeiting his right to the triumph. The Senate has met in the Portico of Octavia, beyond the river, to receive first the laurel-wreathed letter claiming the

Ancient Rome

triumph, and then a visit from the Emperor and his son in person to plead their claim. Needless to say, when Cæsar pleads, his claim is never disregarded. The Senate has decreed a triumph, and it takes place to-day.

From early dawn the whole city has been astir. All thought of work is forgotten, and hundreds of thousands of Romans, young and old, rich and poor, are out in the streets, waiting for the coming of the great procession, and breaking, every now and then, into shouts of "Io Triumphe!" Some prefer to go far afield, and to meet the victors as they pass along the Via Triumphalis, beyond Tiber; some have a fancy for the corner where the procession, after passing the Forum Boarium, will turn sharp to the left along the Via Sacra to the great Forum; but we shall take our post just on the hither side of the river, and watch the long procession file slowly across the Triumphal Bridge. Then we shall transport ourselves, on shoes of swiftness, to the foot of the Capitoline hill, and see what happens when the earthly gods of Rome, Vespasian and Titus, go up to greet their heavenly brother Jupiter of the Capitol.

We are looking, then, across the bridge to the Triumphal Gate, through which the gay train must come. Cæsar and his sons have met once more with the Senate in the Portico of Octavia, have made solemn prayer to the gods, have tasted of the feast provided for the soldiers, and now, beyond the gate, they are offering sacrifice, and putting on the gold-embroidered purple robes that every triumphing victor must wear. Listen! That blast of trumpets means that the procession has begun to move, and through the gateway we see the city fathers coming first, with lictors accompanying them to clear the way. We have not come to see them, however, and the real show begins behind them.

The Triumph

A glitter of metal and a brazen blare from many trumpets heralds its approach. Here come the trumpeters, golden-helmeted and purple-clad, their great metal horns curling from their lips away underneath their arms, and then back over their shoulders, so that the wide mouths bellow triumph right ahead. And here, behind them, is something worth coming out to see—the spoil of all the long campaigns in Syria. Here are vessels of gold, and silver, and bronze, beaten and chased, ivory thrones and couches, carved with the most exquisite skill, and robes and tapestries of the most lovely fabric and the richest Tyrian dye. Now come all the treasures of the captured cities—diadems and necklaces, heaps of gold, and the flash and sparkle of innumerable jewels; so that, as the old Jewish historian says, it seems as though a river of treasure is flowing along the road, and people marvel that they ever held such things to be rarities. The legionaries who bear these riches are themselves gorgeously arrayed in tunics of purple silk, embroidered with gold.

Behind them come statues, in bronze, gold, and silver, borne on the shoulders of panting soldiers; and here are specimens of all the animals of Syria and the Arabian desert, with elephants harnessed for battle, and camels padding on their broad feet along the hard Roman way. But who are these that follow, gaily dressed, to grace the triumph, but belying their garb by their mournful bearing? Some, mostly the women or the children, are in tears; others tramp onwards looking straight before them with eyes that see nothing, in sullen desperation, while others look round upon the gaping and shouting throng with scorn and hatred written upon every line of their faces. These are the prisoners from Jerusalem, who defended their Holy City till famine drove tender mothers to devour

Ancient Rome

their own children, and strong men fell dead of mere want at their posts, and pestilence raged unchecked, and the dead who lay unburied in the streets were more than the living in the houses or on the ramparts. Some of them, the youngest and the fairest, will be sold as slaves; some will be sent as oarsmen for the Roman fleet; and some will die in the arena in deadly conflict with one another, or with wild beasts. Small wonder that they have nothing but sad or bitter looks for Rome's day of triumph, as they think of what awaits them, and remember what they have lost, and their Holy and Beautiful House, now burned with fire.

Now, borne with difficulty by gangs of the brawniest men of the legions, come models of the conquered cities, followed by great panoramas of all the incidents in the campaign. Here you shall see the battles, the sieges, the alarums and excursions of the whole war rendered to the life—armies meeting in the shock of equal charge, the rout and the slaughter of the beaten host, the captives led away in chains, the drawing of the lines around a beleaguered city, the advance of the rams and catapults, towers crashing to the ground and burying helpless multitudes beneath their ruins, and above all the final sack and conflagration of Jerusalem—all painted with the most savage realism, to delight the cruel Roman spirit, that was never satisfied until it had supped full of horrors.

For some of us, the little group of trophies which follows this vulgar display of the horrors of war is infinitely more moving and suggestive—a golden table, a quaint seven-branched candlestick of gold, a few golden utensils for an altar, a number of silver trumpets, a great curtain of blue and purple and scarlet and fine twined linen, a rude pair of stone tablets incised with ancient script. For these are the relics of the Holy of Holies in God's House at Jerusalem never

The Triumph

touched by unholy hands, or viewed by mortal eyes save those of an anointed High Priest of the line of Aaron. Now the basest scoundrel from the Suburra may jeer and mock at them. Behind them comes the man who could not save them—Simon, son of Gioras, bravest of the brave, but also most frantic of fanatics, who defended Jerusalem foot by foot and inch by inch with the most ferocious courage, fighting his enemy within the gates as savagely as he fought the foe without, and deaf to all the appeals of the Roman Prince to surrender on reasonable terms. Simon is dressed in black and laden with chains, and what remains of life for him is measured exactly by the time it will take this procession to pass from where we are standing to the foot of the Capitoline hill.

And now a thrill of expectancy passes over the vast crowd, for the ivory and gold statues of Victory have come in sight, and behind them, on two golden chariots, each drawn by four white horses, come the heroes of the day, Vespasian and his gallant son Titus; while his other son Domitian rides by his father's chariot on a magnificent charger. A thunderous shout of "Io Triumphe!" that shakes the very earth, heralds their appearance, and as the laurel-wreathed horses pace slowly by, we can gaze our fill at the men who have wiped the Holy City from the face of the earth. Vespasian, stout, vulgar-looking, and, in all probability, supremely contemptuous of the part he has to play, and greatly disgusted at the thought of what all this foolery is costing him, would probably already have fallen asleep, as he did, at the risk of his life, when Nero sang, were it not that his uncomfortable position in the jolting chariot makes sleep impossible. But Titus looks and plays his part to perfection.

He and his father are supposed to represent great Jupiter himself to-day, so he wears a purple toga

Ancient Rome

bordered with gold like that which decks the great image in the temple on the Capitol. His arms are encircled by golden bracelets, his head crowned with a gilded laurel-wreath. Strangest of all, since Jupiter Capitolinus is painted vermilion, Titus must needs "paint an inch thick to imitate great Jove," and his hands and his handsome features are disfigured with a thick daubing of red paint—the Roman had a strong taint of ancient and incurable barbarism at his heart, even when he fancied himself the heir of all the ages. In his red hand Titus holds an ivory sceptre surmounted by a golden eagle, and his nodding steeds are led by a purple-clad and golden-helmeted girl who represents Roma. Behind the victor Prince, on the step of the chariot, stands a slave, who every now and then bends forward and whispers in his master's ear, "Cæsar, remember that thou also art a man!" Yes, even in the midst of such glory, a man, doomed to die, like Simon, who must die so soon!

The conquerors pass, and the shouts roll away like thunder through the Triumphal Gate. And now the army follows, in endless procession, chanting rough camp-fire songs, and shouting rude jests at the expense of its commanders; for all is permitted on this day of joy and licence. Meanwhile we use our shoes of swiftness to bring us to the foot of the Capitoline hill. At the top of the marble stairway above us towers the triple colonnade, splendid with purple and gold, of the great Temple of Jupiter. Vespasian and Titus alight from their chariots and slowly mount the steps towards the portico; but they do not enter the temple—yet. One small ceremony, surely worthy of such mighty conquerors, has still to be performed.

The lictors advance upon the black-robed Simon, and lay rough hands upon him. He is led away into the Forum, and there he is scourged with savage

The Triumph

cruelty. Dripping with blood, and already half dead, he is dragged remorselessly to the gloomy Mamertine dungeon which lies beneath the gorgeous temple where his victors wait. Simon is cast down headlong into the hideous underground cell, the Tullianum, where so many famous enemies of Rome have gasped out their lives. An executioner awaits him, and the axe quickly ends his agony. The poor mangled body is dragged away and flung into the Tiber. Did we not say that the Roman remained in some things a barbarian to the very last?

Above, within the portico of the temple, the victors wait. A lictor hastens up the steps, and, bowing low before his lords, he utters a single word—"Vixit" (He has lived). Simon is dead, then, and the two gods on earth, having completed so noble a work, may safely enter the presence of their brother, the God of Heaven. They pass into the sanctuary and bow in thanksgiving and praise before the image of great Jove. Then Titus places in the hand of the god a branch of laurel, and lays his golden diadem upon the divine knees in token that all the chiefest of the spoil shall belong to Jupiter; and the day ends with sacrifices innumerable and Gargantuan feasting through the whole city. Rome is ablaze with lights and ringing with rejoicing; and Simon's mutilated corpse drifts seaward down the muddy Tiber, a witness to heaven and earth against the hearts of stone that even in triumph and joy could not remember mercy.

CHAPTER IX

THE GAMES: THE CIRCUS MAXIMUS

THE Romans, as I dare say you know already, were always passionately fond of their games. From the earliest to the latest days of their history it was always

Ancient Rome

the same with them, and we know that the games had been a regularly established event in the city year, with high officials specially appointed to attend to them, for nearly 400 years before the fall of the Republic and the coming of the Empire. Under the emperors the passion for such amusements grew continually. It came to be no longer a question of games on a few great festival occasions every year, but on every possible opportunity. The only way to keep the turbulent rabble of Rome in good temper was to give them constantly free bread and free games; and the cry, "Bread and the games!" was one to which no ruler of Rome who valued his popularity ever dared to turn a deaf ear.

You must know, however, that what a Roman meant by "games" was something very different from our harmless contests in wrestling, running, and leaping, or even from the sterner conflicts of the great Greek athletic festivals. The only Roman game that was even comparatively harmless was the chariot-race, and even then the drivers ran a good risk of having their necks broken. The real "game" was to see men killing and being killed—gladiators hacking and thrusting at one another, wild beasts being attacked by men whose miserable weapons were only sufficient to provoke the creatures to fury and make them turn upon their hunters with greater savagery, sea-fights in some great artificial lake, where slaves dashed galley against galley in some mimic Salamis or Mylæ, till the waters were red with blood. Such things the fierce Roman nature always loved to see, and the thirst for blood grew year by year, till the Roman games were horrors that cannot be described.

To-day, however, we are going to witness one of the most famous of these tremendous displays of cruelty, or, at least, as much of it as you can stand. We shall



THE REMAINS OF THE TEMPLE OF CASTOR AND POLLUX

The Games: The Circus Maximus

only take a glance at what would really go on for day after day, but I expect you will find a sample quite enough, without staying through all the programme of horrors. To-day you will see Rome at its greatest splendour and in its lowest degradation; for this is the day when Titus, whom we saw in his hour of triumph over Jerusalem, celebrates, with the most splendid games that Rome has ever seen, the opening of the Flavian Amphitheatre, which you and I now call the Colosseum (A.D. 80).

People in Rome have been talking about nothing else for weeks and weeks. The merest acquaintance will stop you in the street to tell you of some of the wonderful new animals which are to be among the 9,000 wild beasts that will be exhibited, and mostly slain, in the Amphitheatre. You hear till you are tired about the merits of the various champions of the different gladiatorial schools in Rome, and the skill of the gladiators whom the Emperor is bringing from the famous school at Capua. When you escape from the wild-beast gossip, and the gladiator gossip, you are buttonholed by another bore, who has an endless yarn to tell you of how the Emperor is going to exhibit also the great sea-battle between the fleets of Corcyra and Corinth. He can tell you the names of all the galleys that will be fighting, and, if you would only listen long enough, I dare say he could tell you the names of all the rowers as well. Rome is living for nothing else but these games, and you are apt at times to wish that they were over and done with.

However, the great day has come at last, and we are going to begin with the mildest of the Roman amusements, the chariot-racing. As a show, the Romans do not care nearly so much for it as for the gladiator fights, except when an unlucky charioteer breaks his neck, or half a dozen ribs, by taking too

Ancient Rome

quick a turn; but as a subject to bet upon and to quarrel over, they like the contests between the Whites and Reds and the Greens and Blues immensely. So we are sure to find the Circus Maximus well filled when we get down there.

Here comes the procession winding down from the Capitol. At its head comes a consular who is acting as "editor" of the races instead of Titus, whose health is none too good, and who is reserving himself for the actual ceremony at the Amphitheatre. The editor is dressed like a triumphing general, in a toga of purple and gold, and bears an ivory sceptre crowned by a golden eagle, while a slave, standing on the step of his two-horse chariot, carries a golden crown of oak-leaves. After him come his family retainers, in white togas, and then picked bodies of horse and foot, the finest young men in Rome. Here, behind them, follow the drivers who are to race—Appuleius Diocles, that wily old strategist of the race-course, Crescens the Moor, with his swarthy face, and the others, the two-horse riders, the dancers, and the band. Last of all (for this is a sacred business, and an act of religion, you will please to remember) we have the different priestly colleges, with incense-bearers and sacred vessels, and many very holy images of the gods, borne in litters or on four-wheeled chariots.

We fall in behind the last chariot of the gods, and the "pompa" winds through the Forum and the Velabrum to the cattle-market, where it enters the great gate of the Circus, makes a solemn circuit of the arena, and then gets itself seated, the editor in the tribunal opposite the winning-line.

The races, of course, may last the whole day long, but we shall be content to see one good one. The company races, where three or four chariots of each faction, Whites and Greens, Blues and Reds, all race

The Games: The Circus Maximus

together, are interesting enough if you can see the races through the dust, but the best races are where a single crack driver runs against another crack of the opposing faction. Diocles the Lusitanian, of the Reds, will drive to-day against Crescens the Moor, of the Greens, and that will be a race worth seeing. Till the champions are ready, look around at the Circus Maximus, for you will not easily see a place to match it in the world.

It lies in a narrow valley between the Palatine and the Aventine hills, and indeed its sides are the slopes of these hills shaped and held up by retaining walls and provided with stone seats rising row upon row behind one another. At one end the seats sweep round from hill to hill in a graceful curve, broken by the Triumphal Gate through which we entered, and by which the victor drives out after the race. The other end is closed by the row of chariot-houses, where the competing teams wait till their race is called. Down the centre of the large arena, which measures more than 1,900 feet in length by 260 in breadth, runs a high barrier. It is decorated with a huge Egyptian obelisk brought from Heliopolis by the Emperor Augustus, and at each end three cones of gilded bronze rise from a stone base. These are the "metæ," or turning-points. The chariots race from the starting-line down the right side of the barrier, whirl round the first meta, along the left side of the barrier, and round the second meta, repeating this seven times. But look at the unending rows of seats. They stretch for 2,100 feet along each side, and for 400 feet across the end. Never in all your life are you likely to see such a crowd again as is seated here. The Romans will tell you all kinds of stories about the numbers. One man will put a Circus crowd at 150,000, another at 350,000, and another at half a

Ancient Rome

million. Take it even at the lowest figure, it is the biggest crowd that ever sat in a single building on earth. Well may they call this the Circus Maximus.

Now the "desultores," as the men are called who race against one another, each man guiding two horses, and leaping from one to the other as they gallop, have finished their turn. Nobody pays much attention to them, anyway, for all are eager to see the great champions. Here they come at last, each in his light pair-horse chariot of ivory, bronze, and gold. Diocles, a stalwart swarthy Spaniard, looks well in his short tunic of red. His body is swathed in coil after coil of leather thongs, to protect him as far as possible in the case of a heavy fall, and beneath the tunic his thighs are also wrapped in leather, so that the great arteries are well covered. A short curved dagger is thrust into his girdle, so that he may cut himself free from the reins, should any accident occur; for, though the charioteer guides his horses with one or both hands, the reins pass round his waist, and are knotted behind his back. His two splendid black Spanish horses, Pompeianus and Cotynus, plunge and curvet impatiently, but Diocles has them under complete control, and passes on, swaying easily in his chariot, to the starting-line.

He is followed by his dark-skinned opponent, Crescens the Moor. Scarcely less famous than his Spanish rival, Crescens is a much sparer and lighter man. His green tunic is wound with leather thongs in the same way as that of Diocles, and his two African-bred grey horses, Tuscus and Victor, are just as famous as those of his opponent. The two chariots are drawn up to the starting-line, and the editor watches carefully till they are absolutely level with each other. In his hand he holds a white linen cloth, and each charioteer, controlling his plunging horses almost



ROUNDING THE META IN THE CIRCUS MAXIMUS.

The Games: The Circus Maximus

without the use of the hand, by swaying his body this way or that, glances upwards anxiously for the fall of the signal.

Now the white cloth is dropped, fluttering down upon the track below the editor's tribunal, and both chariots are off, to an absolutely perfect start. Down the straight, there is nothing to choose between the two pairs for speed, but Crescens has had the luck to draw the inside berth, and as they turn round the first meta he will gain a little, as Diocles will have to drive wider. Watch them as they round the mark. The hub of the off wheel of Crescens's biga almost touches the base of the meta, while the off wheel of his rival is almost grazing the rear part of the Moor's chariot frame. This is the danger moment. A hair's breadth too near the mark, and your light chariot will be smashed and upset, while you yourself will be lucky if you escape with three or four broken ribs or a fractured shoulder. Many a charioteer has never moved again after the fall that followed his attempt to cut the thing too fine. Yet, on the other hand, to drive wide is fatal to your chance. Both drivers, however, are old and experienced hands, and the meta is rounded with perfect skill and neatness, and the chariots whirl with increased speed down the straight on the other side of the barrier.

So well are they matched, that lap after lap is reeled off with almost monotonous regularity, and Crescens, always gaining a little at the turns, gradually opens out a lead of about a length. If nothing happens, and if Diocles has nothing in hand for the last spurt up the finishing straight, it looks as though the race will go to the Moor. Now they are into the seventh lap, and are whirling down together in a cloud of dust for the last turn. The whole population of Rome, you would imagine, has risen from the Circus seats,

Ancient Rome

and each faction is howling encouragement to its champion, men and women screaming, cursing, rejoicing, as one chariot or the other seems to gain or lose. Even the editor himself is on his feet, stooping forward to watch the critical moment.

Look at Diocles! He is bending over the front of his chariot, not using the scourge yet, but urging his horses with strange Spanish cries; and the black horses are coming with a rush. Just as they sweep up to the turn, they begin to overlap the Moorish chariot again, and Crescens, as the black heads draw up past his left shoulder, gives one glance round. Just one glance; but that glance was part of the plan of his wily rival, whose rush was timed just to fluster his opponent's nerve at the very moment when his horses needed all his care. That turn of the head has mechanically ended in a twitch of the off rein, and the hub of the Moorish wheel has taken the hair's breadth too much that means disaster. There is a sudden grind and check; the black horses and the red tunic behind them seem to leap forward alone, and rush down the straight to the winning-line amidst a thunderous roar of cheers and curses.

Behind them come the greys, half mad with excitement, dragging a broken chariot-pole. Beside the meta lies a broken heap of wood and bronze, and a little beyond it a motionless figure in a green tunic. It looks, for a few moments, as though the Moor had driven his last race; and indeed a less skilled driver must have been killed by such a fall. But as the ring-keepers hasten up to him, Crescens slowly rises, shakes the dust from his tunic, and, though dazed a little, is able, with the help of a friendly arm, to hobble out of the arena. With amazing swiftness he had cut himself clear of the reins as the chariot lurched, and he has sustained no more damage than a pretty severe

The Games: The Colosseum

shock and a few bruises. In their hearts, I think the Romans are a little disappointed that, since there had to be a smash, Crescens did not make it complete by breaking his neck, and so giving them a real sensation to gossip over.

CHAPTER X

THE GAMES: THE COLOSSEUM

Now that we have seen the Circus Maximus, and a Roman chariot-race, it is time to pay a visit to the new Flavian Amphitheatre, and see something of the kind of game which the Romans really did enjoy—the fight to the death between highly trained gladiators. The great building at which Rome has been wondering ever since Vespasian began to rear it has not yet got the name of Colosseum by which it will be best known in the future; for though Titus has knocked the head off the colossal statue of Nero, and put a head of the Sun-god on it instead, it will not be shifted to the front of the Amphitheatre till Hadrian's time. Hadrian will have it hauled to its new pedestal by two dozen elephants; but by that time the Sun-god's head will have vanished from the huge statue, and the head of a scoundrel as infamous as Nero—the Emperor Commodus—will have taken its place. Meanwhile, though the Colossus is not there yet, we may anticipate a little, and call the Amphitheatre by the name with which everybody is familiar.

We have not far to go from the Circus to the Colosseum, which lies just at the other side of the Palatine hill. If you like, we can stroll round by the cattle-market and the Velabrum, and through the Forum, with its crowd of pillars and temples and porticoes; then, as we pass the Temple of Venus and Rome,

Ancient Rome

the mighty building towers up before us. Everybody knows what it is like, so we needn't pause to look at the outside of it, save for a moment, that we may think of its size. It is a huge oval, almost 600 feet in its greatest length and 466 feet across. Its four storeys tower aloft to a height of nearly 160 feet, and above them rise the masts to carry the great awning that is stretched over the building when the sun grows hot. Outside, the walls are of beautifully hewn free-stone, adorned with pillars and arcades; within, we shall find everything faced with marble.

At one of the eighty entrances on the ground floor, we show our ivory tickets, which are marked with the number of our door, our section, our row, and our seat. The higher up you are in the social scale, the lower down you sit, and, consequently, the better you see. So, for this occasion only, we shall take the privilege of sitting among the senators, or, at all events, not higher up than the knights. Now that we have found our seats, take a look round before the show begins. Beneath us lies the arena, a great sand-covered oval space, 264 feet by 156, underneath which, and of course hidden from view, are the dressing-rooms for the gladiators, the cells for the prisoners who are to fight with wild beasts, the dens for the beasts themselves, and the horrible place where the dead bodies of the vanquished are dragged.

The arena is separated from the lowest row of seats by a marble wall, high enough to keep the spectators well beyond the reach of the leap of the most savage lion or tiger. Around the top of this wall are ranged the seats of all the great folks. At the two opposite ends of the shorter axis of the arena are two stately chairs of gilded bronze, each raised on a marble dais. In the higher of these sits the Emperor, and in the other the presiding magistrate, or editor. Close to the



Anderson, photo



Alinari, photo

The Games: The Colosseum

Emperor are the priestesses of the goddess Vesta, the Vestal Virgins, who are the most sacred beings in Rome, and whose judgment here to-day, for mercy or for the opposite, will mean life or death to many a poor soul in the arena. It is not often that the Vestals vote for mercy, women as they are, and saints as they are supposed to be. Beyond them, all round the ring, sit the aristocracy of Rome, dignitaries of Church and State, great ladies, famous soldiers. Behind, again, and higher up, are the lesser gentry, the knights and their ladies, the wealthy commoners, and so forth. And then, tier by tier, the audience rises in height and increases in numbers, but sinks as steadily in dignity and importance, till in the top rows of all, among the gods, you have all the unwashed rascaldom of the Suburra and the Tiber flats, who live on the free bread of the State, and on what they can steal, and do no harder work than attending a show like this, or perhaps cutting a throat on a dark night.

Now the sailors from the fleet at Ostia have drawn the great purple awnings to screen us all from the sun, and hidden pipes have thrown a spray of delicate scent into the air, so that we are all as comfortable as possible—50,000 of us at least; some would say nearly double that number. The Emperor, who is looking anything but well (indeed, he has only a year to live), has signified his gracious pleasure, and the editor gives the signal for the games to begin. Out from one of the great dark doors which open on the arena comes the long procession of the men who are about to kill and be killed for a day's amusement to the Roman crowd. They march in order round the arena, Samnite and Thracian, Mirmillo and Retiarius, and all the other types of the horrible trade, decked with fantastic adornments, and clad in equally fantastic armour. Under the high brazen crests of the helmets

Ancient Rome

with their gaudy feathers, strange impassive masks of perforated metal look upon you, so that the gladiator can see nothing of his opponent's face. Only an occasional flash of an eye behind the visor betrays that he is fighting with a man, and not with a brazen monster. The great shields are overburdened with tasteless ornament, the sword arms of the champions shapeless in their swathings of leather. As the procession winds round the arena, shouts are raised for this or that gladiator who is a favourite with the public for bravery or skill.

Now they are in front of the Emperor's seat, and as they pass the ruler of the world, every arm is raised in salute, and a thundering chorus rises: "Hail, Cæsar! Those who are about to die salute thee." Completing the circuit, the procession breaks up in the midst of the arena, the men are matched in pairs, and blunt weapons are distributed for a few minutes' preliminary fencing. After the champions have shown their skill for a little in this harmless fashion, the editor's voice is heard: "Lay down now your blunt swords, and let the fight with sharp ones go on." Down in the arena, two men come forward—the lanista, who arranges the contests, and the herald, who proclaims the name and the equipment of each fighter. The latter blows his huge horn and announces that the first fight will be between the heavy-armed fighter Gaius Avilius, and the Thracian Marcus Antonius. The lanista draws with his wand a line in the sand for the combatants to stand up to, and the two champions advance.

Avilius is what our forefathers used to call a Samnite—not that he is of the race of our old enemies, but that he uses an equipment something like that of those stubborn fighters of the olden days. On his left arm he carries a big oblong shield, his head is

The Games: The Colosseum

protected by a brazen helmet adorned with a high crest and wings of gaily coloured feathers, while a perforated visor covers his face. He has no breastplate, but wears only a loin-cloth, girt with a broad leather belt; his right arm is swathed from wrist to shoulder in thongs of leather, and his left leg is covered from the knee to the ankle by a brazen greave. His sword is the short, heavy, two-edged blade of the Roman legionary.

His opponent Antonius is no more a Thracian than Avilius is a Samnite, but it pleases the Romans to imagine that he is armed like a warrior of Thrace, though the idea is merely a fancy. His helmet, which has a perforated visor like that of Avilius, bears a griffin for a crest. His belt, loin-cloth, and arm-guard of leather match those of his antagonist; but he has leather swathings on both legs, and highly ornamented greaves as well. His shield, however, is by no means so good a protection as the broad oblong of the Samnite, being merely a small round buckler, and his sword, a curved scimitar, looks by no means such a workmanlike tool as the straight Roman blade. Samnite against Thracian is a favourite fight in the Amphitheatre, and the whole audience takes sides as enthusiastically as over the Blues and Greens in the chariot-races. You can hear bets being offered and accepted on every hand as the rivals face one another across the line.

Now the blades cross, and a few cautious passes are made. The men are merely testing one another, and the spectators wait a little impatiently for the real business to begin. Now the Thracian leaps in; his scimitar is not much use for a thrust, and he swings a swift cut at the Samnite's neck just below the left side of his visor. Avilius never moves his feet; a quick upward movement of his left arm, and the blow is caught on the upper side of his big shield; and, as

Ancient Rome

Antonius leaps back again, the straight sword darts at his chest in a lightning thrust, only to be checked by the round buckler. This little beginning, however, has warmed the men up, and now thrust and cut and parry succeed one another with bewildering rapidity. Both fighters are much quicker on their feet than one would have imagined from the heavy greaves they wear, and the Thracian uses his inferior weapon so cleverly that his cut is almost as swift as the Samnite's thrust. Blow after blow clatters on shield or buckler, or thuds dully on the leather arm-guards; and the spectators lean forward from their seats, or rise to their feet in excitement, urging the fighters to greater exertions.

Now the Thracian, who seems, as he would need to be, a little faster than his enemy, has got a heavy cut home on the Samnite's helmet. Avilius's shield was just a little too slow, and as the keen blade rings on the brass, the Samnite reels under the blow. Before Antonius can follow it up, however, the big shield has come into play again, and Avilius is well covered. A deep seam along the side of the helmet shows the keenness of the Thracian blade; but the audience, watching closely, sees with some disappointment that no real wound has been given, for no blood appears. Among the shouts that come from the upper tiers of seats, there are some unflattering comments on the slowness of the Samnite in thus letting his opponent's blow get home.

The reproach seems to have stirred Avilius's blood. He is pressing now. Carefully covering himself with his shield, he darts in thrust after thrust, so that the Thracian's small buckler is perpetually in motion, and he has little chance for another heavy blow. And then, almost like a flash of lightning, comes the end. The Samnite delivers a straight thrust at his rival's

The Games: The Colosseum

throat just beneath the visor, and the round buckler swings up to meet the point; but the thrust was never meant to be sent home. Almost in the act of thrusting the line of the point is changed, and the short blade goes home just beneath the Thracian's ribs. Antonius staggers as Avilius draws out the reddened steel, recovers himself for a moment, and tries feebly to continue the fight; but the blood is flowing fast down his side, and a wild-beast roar comes from the whole vast crowd—"Habet!" (He has it).

The vanquished gladiator stands swaying on his feet. He has dropped his scimitar and shield, and he raises his left arm, the forefinger of the hand uplifted, in acknowledgment of defeat and in prayer for mercy. Behind the impassive mask of his visor, his eyes, already clouding, scan the long rows above, with the faint hope that he may see the down-turned thumbs that mean at least the chance of life—such chance as his wound may afford. Titus, of course, has the final word, and if the Emperor consulted his own inclination, no doubt he would give the poor bleeding wretch his chance. But, on such a day as the opening of the great Amphitheatre, not even Titus, popular as he is, would dare to cross the wishes of the crowd. Judgment will have to come from the soul of Rome, and surely a fighting race will be merciful to a brave fighter.

Do you think so? The Emperor looks round—first, of course, to the Vestal Virgins, whose position in Rome is such that they, almost more surely than the Emperor himself, can give life or refuse it. Among all those noble and gently-nurtured women, not one sign of mercy. Every thumb is turned upwards, and the cruel verdict of the Vestals is repeated all round the Amphitheatre. Rome would despise itself if the first fight in its great new pleasure-house ended without the finest of all sights, a violent death. Antonius has

Ancient Rome

read his fate, and, as his trembling limbs refuse to support him longer, he gradually sinks on one knee, propping himself feebly on his outstretched arm. The Samnite comes behind him, and one merciful blow closes the tragedy. The attendants appear, strike a hook through the belt of the dead gladiator, and drag the corpse from the arena. Fresh sand is sprinkled over the pool of blood, and we are ready for another sensation. The Flavian Amphitheatre has received its baptism of blood.

You have seen one Roman gladiatorial combat, and I think you will agree with me that one is quite enough. So there will be no need to drag you through the rest of the day's programme. After Samnite and Thracian, follow Retiarius and Mirmillo. The Retiarius has no weapons save a net and a trident, and his aim is to entangle his opponent in the net, and then disable him with the trident. The Mirmillo, on the other hand, is armed with helmet, sword, and shield. Sometimes the audience calls him a Secutor, or pursuer, because when his enemy has missed the cast with the net, the heavy-armed man pursues him, and tries to run him through with the sword before the net can be gathered up for another cast. The Mirmillo's helmet is of the Gallic shape, with a fish for its crest, and the net-man, as he advances to the attack, often chants a doggerel verse, which means something like this: "I am not fishing for you, I am fishing for a fish; why do you run away from me, you Gaul?"

Net and trident, you would imagine, would have no chance whatever against shield, helmet, and sword. The very opposite is the case, however. Net and trident generally win, and there is no more popular fighter among the gladiators than this deadly fisherman with his gigantic toasting-fork and his grim rhyme.

The Games: The Colosseum

When the fisherman has caught his Gallic fish, or the fish has caught the fisherman, as the case may be, there will be chariot-fights, which the Romans have learned to like since the legionaries brought back word from Britain of how the woad-stained warriors there came whirling down to battle in light cars—tournaments in which horsemen armed with lances will charge one another like the steel-clad knights of the Middle Ages, sword and lasso fights, a variety of the net-and-sword combat, and all kinds of duels that can be planned to excite the interest of the huge audience.

When the regular gladiators have finished their part of the show, the turn of the beast-fighters will come, and slaves and criminals, armed with the paltriest mockery of weapons, will be matched against lions, tigers, bears, or even perhaps crocodiles. In these fights the spectators do sometimes show a little pity, not for the men—you must never imagine a Roman guilty of such weakness as that—but for the animals. They do grudge to see a fine lion or tiger, brought oversea at great expense, maimed, or perhaps even, by extraordinarily bad luck, killed, by a mere slave.

So this banquet of horrors will go on, day after day, for a hundred days on end; for Titus has resolved to make the opening of his great Amphitheatre a thing to be remembered. On one of the days, the whole arena will be flooded, and two fleets will act in the most realistic fashion, even to the sinking of half the ships and the drowning or slaying of half the crews, the famous old sea-fight between Corcyra and Corinth. But we have seen quite as much as we want to see, and perhaps a little more, of the gentle pastimes of ancient Rome. Only, as you have seen the first fight in the Colosseum, perhaps you may take a glance at the last.

For 320 years after the first victim had gasped out

Ancient Rome

his life on the sand of the Flavian arena, the Colosseum remained the favourite gathering-place of the Roman mob, and its bloodthirsty shows the favourite pastimes. Even in Christian days, and in spite of many efforts to suppress the abomination, the gladiatorial shows still drew their thousands year by year to watch the dying agonies of men for whom Christ died. And then, one day in the reign of the Emperor Honorius, it fell out that an untutored Asiatic monk named Telemachus, visiting Rome, strayed into the great Amphitheatre. Appalled at the sight of the cruelties in which a Roman crowd found nothing but the keenest pleasure, he sprang into the arena and rushed with outstretched arms between the gladiators. The rude fighters jostled him aside, but he would not be denied, and still thrust himself between the drawn swords.

The wild beast in the Roman heart, never very difficult to awaken, was roused at once. Each member of the vast crowd seized the first missile that came to his hand. The rash monk was overwhelmed beneath a shower of stones from all quarters of the building, and perished where he stood. But his work was done. Scarcely had the last quiver of his broken body died away, when the crowd awoke to the realization of what an infamy had been committed. Hardened as the Romans were, they felt that they had slain a true man of God. Silently, with bowed heads and burdened consciences, they left that bloodstained and guilty house; and when Honorius issued an edict abolishing for ever the cruel sports of the Amphitheatre, they submitted without a murmur.

And now the home of all these horrors stands silent and deserted, the most tremendous ruin of old Rome, and perhaps the most significant also—a witness to all time of how power, and wealth, and enlightenment may only make human hearts more utterly merciless



THE PANTHEON (p. 86)

(The most perfectly preserved of ancient Roman buildings. It bears the name of Agrippa, but the present building was erected by Hadrian. Probably the oldest dome in the world, as it is one of the most perfect)

The Secret of Rome's Greatness

and cruel, unless they are controlled by a diviner spirit. If there has ever been a building on earth haunted by the Furies, surely it is the Colosseum!

CHAPTER XI

THE SECRET OF ROME'S GREATNESS

Now that we have come to the last chapter of our little book, and I have told you something of how Rome began, and grew, and won her freedom, how her armies were marshalled on land and her fleets at sea, how her citizens lived, and how they enjoyed themselves, I can imagine you still saying: "But you have not told us how it was that Rome became so great, and that a little Latin town came at last to rule the whole world." And, indeed, when I look over what I have written, I see that I have told you many things that are unpleasant about the Romans—their cruelty, their hardness, their luxury—but have said very little about the better side of their character. And yet that is the most important of all, for when a nation becomes great, it is never by ferocity, or falseness, but always by something in the nation that is good and sterling. So now I want to tell you in a few words what, so far as I can see, was the quality that brought the Romans to the front and kept them there for so long.

It was no wonderful and brilliant genius. That precious gift of Heaven belonged to the Greeks, not to the Romans, and because of it the story of Greece shines like a star through the darkness of the world's early days. Neither in thought, in poetry, nor in art, did Rome ever approach to anything within sight of the greatness of Greece. The torch of her best thinkers was lit at the fire of Greek thought, her

Ancient Rome

dramatists were but bungling copyists of the Greek playwrights. As for her sculpture and painting, she either brought them wholesale from Greece, or had second-rate copies made within her own land of the great works that had made Greece for ever glorious.

Not even in her own particular sphere of war did she exhibit any very remarkable genius, until Julius Cæsar arose to teach the world what a Roman army was capable of when it had a born soldier to lead it. During all the hundreds of years that she made war, you can count on the fingers of one hand the captains of really outstanding merit whom she produced; and even the best of these, such as Scipio Africanus, the conqueror of Hannibal, have no claim to a place in the very first rank beside such giants as Alexander, Hannibal, Cæsar, and Napoleon. She produced some of the very worst generals who ever, I suppose, commanded on a battlefield, a few really good and capable soldiers, and a number of steady, average captains who knew the splendid weapon put into their hands and gave it a fair chance to do its work. The army did the rest, whenever it was not hampered by a fool. But I think there is nothing more remarkable in the story of Rome than the scarcity of real military genius in a race which lived by and for war alone.

No, the real secret of Rome's greatness lies not in any brilliancy of intellect, but in a quiet, homely virtue which was bred in every Roman from his very earliest days, which was fostered by every influence in his home life, encouraged by every public influence, demanded of him in his military training, and so continually presented as the natural and necessary thing that finally it became a part of his being, just as much as his hand, his brain, or his life-blood. That virtue was *discipline*. The first thing a Roman

The Secret of Rome's Greatness

learned was to obey; the next was to regard his obedience as a necessary part in the working of the great machine which, in the State or on the battlefield, was perpetually working out the greatness and glory of the Eternal City; the third was to realize that his own individual life counted as nothing, if the duty of obedience claimed its sacrifice in the greater interests of the State.

Mr. Rudyard Kipling has put it in one sentence in the old engineer's song—

"Now, a' together, hear them lift their lesson—theirs an' mine:
Law, Orrder, Duty an' Restraint, Obedience, Discipline!"

The thing that made McAndrew's engines strong and smooth-running is the thing that made the Roman Empire, and kept its vast machine running for centuries. When discipline died out of the Roman character, the Empire fell.

Just think of the stories in which the Romans delighted. They are not stories of cleverness, like so many of the Greek legends; nor have they, generally, the beauty of those older tales, though they have a stern beauty of their own. They are all stories either of courage, like that of Horatius, of Scævola, who held his hand in the fire to show how vain it was to dream of tempting him to treachery, or of Clœlia, the maiden hostage who swam the Tiber; or else of devotion to the Fatherland, like that of Marcus Curtius, who leaped into the chasm in the Forum; or of stern obedience to the strict letter of the law, like that of Manlius, who sentenced his own son to death because he fought and slew an enemy against the army order which forbade such combats; or of self-restraint, as when the Senate went out to meet their beaten Consul Varro, after the ghastly slaughter of Cannæ, and, instead of reproaching him for his failure,

Ancient Rome

publicly thanked him for that he had not despaired of the Republic.

Not even Hannibal could finally beat a nation which met its defeats in such a spirit; and you must remember that for long centuries that was the spirit of all Rome. It was expected, it was the natural thing, that a Roman should obey; that he should do his work, whatever it might be, with the highest degree of thoroughness and faithfulness; that he should, anywhere and at any time, be ready to die rather than yield a foot of ground that his city had set him to hold. And so Rome's armies, often beaten at the beginning of a war, always triumphed in the end; so the roads that she toilsomely drove across Europe still survive, and her bridges still stand above the streams that she bridled by them, defiant of storm and flood; so nothing short of modern high explosives will uproot the foundations of her ancient buildings. So, above all, she gave to all Europe the law by which she had bound and disciplined herself, and gave it with such thoroughness that the law codes of the nations to-day are based on the ancient laws of Rome.

To the world she rose to command the world. The world learned to obey. The lesson that mankind is that all things that has learned to order are of all, rather than in those of the individual. Indeed, it is a great and a worthy lesson, and cruel, hard, unsympathetic though the Roman often was, we owe him an endless debt of gratitude for this, that he not only tamed the rude ancient world and broke its barbarism, but laid, by his doctrine of discipline and his victorious devotion to it, the foundation of the modern State.